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SICILIAN ROMANCE.

BY

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AUTHOR OF THE

ROMANCE OF THE FOREST,
CASTLES OF ATHLIN AND DUNBAYNE,
&c. &c.

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VOL. I.

"I could a Tale unfold."

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SICILIAN ROMANCE.

ON the northern shore of Sicily are still to be seen the magnificent remains of a castle, which formerly belonged to the noble house of Mazzini. It stands in the centre of a small bay, and upon a gentle acclivity, which, on one side, slopes towards the sea, and on the other rises into an eminence crowned by dark woods. The situation is admirably beautiful and picturesque, and the ruins have an air of ancient grandeur, which, contrasted with the present solitude of the scene, impresses the traveller with awe and curiosity. During my travels abroad I visited this spot. As I walked over the loose fragments

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of stone, which lay scattered through the immense area of the fabrick, and surveyed the sublimity and grandeur of the ruins, I recurred, by a natural association of ideas, to the times when these walls stood proudly in their original splendour, when the halls were the scenes of hospitality and festive magnificence, and when they resounded with the voices of those whom death had long since swept from the earth. "Thus," said I, "shall the present generation—he who now sinks in misery—and he who now swims in pleasure, alike pass away and be forgotten." My heart swelled with the reflection; and, as I turned from the scene with a sigh, I fixed my eyes upon a friar, whose venerable figure, gently bending towards the earth, formed no uninteresting object in the picture. He observed my emotion; and, as my eye met his, shook his head, and pointed to the ruin. "These walls," said he, "were once the seat of luxury
and

and vice. They exhibited a singular instance of the retribution of heaven, and were from that period forsaken, and abandoned to decay." His words excited my curiosity, and I enquired further concerning their meaning.

"A solemn history belongs to this castle," said he, "which is too long and intricate for me to relate. It is, however, contained in a manuscript in our library, of which I could, perhaps, procure you a sight. A brother of our order, a descendant of the noble house of Mazzini, collected and recorded the most striking incidents relating to his family, and the history thus formed, he left as a legacy to our convent. If you please, we will walk thither."

I accompanied him to the convent, and the friar introduced me to his superior, a man of an intelligent mind and benevolent heart, with whom I passed some hours in interesting conversation. I believe my sentiments pleased him;

for, by his indulgence, I was permitted to take abstracts of the history before me, which, with some further particulars obtained in conversation with the abate, I have arranged in the following pages.

CHAPTER I.

TOWARDS the close of the sixteenth century, this castle was in the possession of Ferdinand, fifth marquis of Mazzini, and was for some years the principal residence of his family. He was a man of a voluptuous and imperious character. To his first wife, he married Louisa Bernini, second daughter of the count della Salario, a lady yet more distinguished for the sweetness of her manners and the gentleness of her disposition, than for her beauty. She brought the marquis one son and two daughters, who lost their amiable mother in early childhood. —The arrogant and impetuous character of the marquis operated powerfully upon the mild and susceptible nature of his lady; and it was by many persons believed, that his unkindness

and neglect put a period to her life. However this might be, he soon afterwards married Maria de Vellorno, a young lady eminently beautiful, but of a character very opposite to that of her predecessor. She was a woman of infinite art, devoted to pleasure, and of an unconquerable spirit. The marquis, whose heart was dead to paternal tenderness, and whose present lady was too volatile to attend to domestic concerns, committed the education of his daughters to the care of a lady, completely qualified for the undertaking, and who was distantly related to the late marchioness.

He quitted Mazzini soon after his second marriage, for the gaieties and splendour of Naples, whither his son accompanied him. Though naturally of a haughty and overbearing disposition, he was governed by his wife. His passions were vehement, and she had the address to bend them to her own purpose;

pose; and so well to conceal her influence, that he thought himself most independent when he was most enslaved. He paid an annual visit to the castle of Mazzini; but the marchioness seldom attended him, and he staid only to give such general directions concerning the education of his daughters, as his pride, rather than his affection, seemed to dictate.

Emilia, the elder, inherited much of her mother's disposition. She had a mild and sweet temper, united with a clear and comprehensive mind. Her younger sister, Julia, was of a more lively cast. An extreme sensibility subjected her to frequent uneasiness; her temper was warm, but generous; she was quickly irritated, and quickly appeased; and to a reproof, however gentle, she would often weep, but was never sullen. Her imagination was ardent, and her mind early exhibited symp-

toms of genius. It was the particular care of madame de Menon to counteract those traits in the disposition of her young pupils, which appeared inimical to their future happiness; and for this task she had abilities which entitled her to hope for success. A series of early misfortunes had entended her heart, without weakening the powers of her understanding. In retirement she had acquired tranquillity, and had almost lost the consciousness of those sorrows which yet threw a soft and not unpleasing shade over her character. She loved her young charge with maternal fondness, and their gradual improvement and respectful tenderness repaid all her anxiety. Madame excelled in music and drawing. She had often forgot her sorrows in these amusements, when her mind was too much occupied to derive consolation from books, and she was assiduous to impart to Emilia and Julia a power so valuable as that of beguiling

ing the sense of affliction. Emilia's taste led her to drawing, and she soon made rapid advances in that art. Julia was uncommonly susceptible of the charms of harmony. She had feelings which trembled in unison to all its various and enchanting powers.

The instructions of madame she caught with astonishing quickness, and in a short time attained to a degree of excellence in her favourite study, which few persons have ever exceeded. Her manner was entirely her own. It was not in the rapid intricacies of execution, that she excelled so much as in that delicacy of taste, and in those enchanting powers of expression, which seem to breathe a soul through the sound, and which take captive the heart of the hearer. The lute was her favourite instrument, and its tender notes accorded well with the sweet and melting tones of her voice.

The castle of Mazzini was a large ir-

regular fabrick, and seemed suited to receive a numerous train of followers, such as, in those days, served the nobility, either in the splendour of peace, or the turbulence of war. Its present family inhabited only a small part of it; and even this part appeared forlorn and almost desolate from the spaciousness of the apartments, and the length of the galleries which led to them. A melancholy stillness reigned through the halls, and the silence of the courts, which were shaded by high turrets, was for many hours together undisturbed by the sound of any foot-step. Julia, who discovered an early taste for books, loved to retire in an evening to a small closet in which she had collected her favourite authors. This room formed the western angle of the castle: one of its windows looked upon the sea, beyond which was faintly seen, skirting the horizon, the dark rocky coast of Calabria; the other opened towards a
part

part of the castle, and afforded a prospect of the neighbouring woods. Her musical instruments were here deposited, with whatever assisted her favourite amusements. This spot, which was at once elegant, pleasant, and retired, was embellished with many little ornaments of her own invention, and with some drawings executed by her sister. The closet was adjoining her chamber, and was separated from the apartments of madame, only by a short gallery. This gallery opened into another, long and winding, which led to the grand staircase terminating in the north hall, with which the chief apartments of the north side of the edifice communicated.

Madame de Menon's apartment opened into both galleries. It was in one of these rooms that she usually spent the mornings, occupied in the improvement of her young charge. The windows looked towards the sea, and the room was light and pleasant. It was

their custom to dine in one of the lower apartments, and at table they were always joined by a dependant of the marquis's, who had resided many years in the castle, and who instructed the young ladies in the Latin tongue, and in geography. During the fine evenings of summer, this little party frequently supped in a pavilion, which was built on an eminence in the woods belonging to the castle. From this spot the eye had an almost boundless range of sea and land. It commanded the straits of Messina, with the opposite shores of Calabria, and a great extent of the wild and picturesque scenery of Sicily. Mount Etna, crowned with eternal snows, and shooting from among the clouds, formed a grand and sublime picture in the back ground of the scene. The city of Palermo was also distinguishable ; and Julia, as she gazed on its glittering spires, would endeavour in imagination to depicture its beau-

beauties, while she secretly sighed for a view of that world, from which she had hitherto been secluded by the mean jealousy of the marchioness, upon whose mind the dread of rival beauty operated strongly to the prejudice of Emilia and Julia. She employed all her influence over the marquis to detain them in retirement; and, though Emilia was now twenty, and her sister eighteen, they had never passed the boundaries of their father's domains.

Vanity often produces unreasonable alarm; but the marchioness had in this instance just grounds for apprehension; the beauty of her lord's daughters has seldom been exceeded. The person of Emilia was finely proportioned. Her complexion was fair, her hair flaxen, and her dark blue eyes were full of sweet expression. Her manners were dignified and elegant, and in her air was a feminine softness, a tender timidity, which irresistibly attracted the heart of the beholder. The figure of Julia was
light

light and graceful—her step was airy—her mien animated, and her smile enchanting. Her eyes were dark, and full of fire, but tempered with modest sweetness. Her features were finely turned—every laughing grace played round her mouth, and her countenance quickly discovered all the various emotions of her soul. The dark auburn hair which curled in beautiful profusion in her neck, gave a finishing charm to her appearance.

Thus lovely, and thus veiled in obscurity, were the daughters of the noble Mazzini. But they were happy, for they knew not enough of the world seriously to regret the want of its enjoyments, though Julia would sometimes sigh for the airy image which her fancies painted, and a painful curiosity would arise concerning the busy scenes from which she was excluded. A return to her customary amusements, however, would chase the ideal image from

from her mind, and restore her usual happy complacency. Books, music, and painting, divided the hours of her leisure, and many beautiful summer evenings were spent in the pavilion, where the refined conversation of madame, the poetry of Tasso, the lute of Julia, and the friendship of Emilia, combined to form a species of happiness, such as elevated and highly susceptible minds are alone capable of receiving or communicating. Madame understood and practised all the graces of conversation, and her young pupils perceived its value, and caught the spirit of its character.

Conversation may be divided into two classes—the familiar and the sentimental. It is the province of the familiar, to diffuse cheerfulness and ease—to open the heart of man to man, and to beam a temperate sunshine upon the mind.—Nature and art must conspire to render us susceptible of the charms, and to qualify

qualify us for the practice of the second class of conversation, here termed sentimental, and in which madame de Menon particularly excelled. To good sense, lively feeling, and natural delicacy of taste, must be united an expansion of mind, and a refinement of thought, which is the result of high cultivation. To render this sort of conversation irresistibly attractive, a knowledge of the world is requisite, and that enchanting ease, that elegance of manner, which is to be acquired only by frequenting the higher circles of polished life. In sentimental conversation, subjects interesting to the heart, and to the imagination, are brought forward; they are discussed in a kind of sportive way, with animation and refinement, and are never continued longer than politeness allows. Here fancy flourishes,—the sensibilities expand—and wit, guided by delicacy and embellished by taste—points to the heart.

Such

Such was the conversation of madame de Menon; and the pleasant gaiety of the pavilion seemed peculiarly to adapt it for the scene of social delights. On the evening of a very sultry day, having supped in their favourite spot, the coolness of the hour, and the beauty of the night, tempted this happy party to remain there later than usual. Returning home they were surprised by the appearance of a light through the broken window-shutters of an apartment, belonging to a division of the castle, which had for many years been shut up. They stopped to observe it, when it suddenly disappeared, and was seen no more. Madame de Menon, disturbed at this phenomenon, hastened into the castle with a view of inquiring into the cause of it, when she was met in the north hall by Vincent. She related to him what she had seen, and ordered an immediate search to be made for the keys of those apartments. She apprehended

hended that some person had penetrated that part of the edifice with an intention of plunder ; and, disdaining a paltry fear where her duty was concerned, she summoned the servants of the castle, with an intention of accompanying them thither. Vincent smiled at her apprehensions, and imputed what she had seen to an illusion, which the solemnity of the hour had impressed upon her fancy. Madame, however, persevered in her purpose ; and, after a long and repeated search, a massy key, covered with rust, was produced. She then proceeded to the southern side of the edifice, accompanied by Vincent, and followed by the servants, who were agitated with impatient wonder. The key was applied to an iron gate, which opened into a court that separated this division from the other parts of the castle. They entered this court, which was overgrown with grass and weeds, and ascended some steps that led to a large door, which

which they vainly endeavoured to open. All the different keys of the castle were applied to the lock, without effect, and they were at length compelled to quit the place, without having either satisfied their curiosity, or quieted their fears. Every thing, however, was still, and the light did not re-appear. Madame concealed her apprehensions, and the family retired to rest.

This circumstance dwelt on the mind of madame de Menon, and it was some time before she ventured again to spend an evening in the pavilion. After several months passed, without further disturbance or discovery, another occurrence renewed the alarm. Julia had one night remained in her closet later than usual. A favourite book had engaged her attention beyond the hour of customary repose, and every inhabitant of the castle, except herself, had long been lost in sleep. She was roused from her forgetfulness, by the sound of the
castle

castle clock, which struck one. Surprised at the lateness of the hour, she rose in haste, and was moving to her chamber, when the beauty of the night attracted her to the window. She opened it; and observing a fine effect of moon-light upon the dark woods, leaned forwards. In that situation she had not long remained, when she perceived a light faintly flash through a casement in the uninhabited part of the castle. A sudden tremor seized her, and she with difficulty supported herself. In a few moments it disappeared, and soon after a figure, bearing a lamp, proceeded from an obscure door belonging to the south tower; and stealing along the outside of the castle walls, turned round the southern angle, by which it was afterwards hid from the view. Astonished and terrified at what she had seen, she hurried to the apartment of madame de Menon, and related the circumstance. The servants were immediately

diately roused, and the alarm became general. Madame arose and descended into the north hall, where the domestics were already assembled. No one could be found of courage sufficient to enter into the courts; and the orders of madame were disregarded, when opposed to the effects of superstitious terror. She perceived that Vincent was absent, but as she was ordering him to be called, he entered the hall. Surprised to find the family thus assembled, he was told the occasion. He immediately ordered a party of the servants to attend him round the castle walls; and with some reluctance, and more fear, they obeyed him. They all returned to the hall, without having witnessed any extraordinary appearance; but though their fears were not confirmed, they were by no means dissipated. The appearance of a light in a part of the castle which had for several years been shut up, and to which time and circumstance had given

given an air of singular desolation, might reasonably be supposed to excite a strong degree of surprize and terror. In the minds of the vulgar, any species of the wonderful, is received with avidity ; and the servants did not hesitate in believing the southern division of the castle to be inhabited by a supernatural power. Too much agitated to sleep, they agreed to watch for the remainder of the night. For this purpose they arranged themselves in the east gallery, where they had a view of the south tower from which the light had issued. The night, however, passed without any further disturbance ; and the morning dawn, which they beheld with inexpressible pleasure, dissipated for a while the glooms of apprehension. But the return of evening renewed the general fear, and for several successive nights the domestics watched the southern tower. Although nothing remarkable was seen, a report was soon raised, and believed, that the southern

southern side of the castle was haunted. Madame de Menon, whose mind was superior to the effects of superstition, was yet disturbed and perplexed, and she determined, if the light re-appeared, to inform the marquis of the circumstance, and request the keys of those apartments.

The marquis, immersed in the dissipations of Naples, seldom remembered the castle, or its inhabitants. His son, who had been educated under his immediate care, was the sole object of his pride, as the marchioness was that of his affection. He loved her with romantic fondness, which she repaid with seeming tenderness, and secret perfidy. She allowed herself a free indulgence in the most licentious pleasures, yet conducted herself with an art so exquisite as to elude discovery, and even suspicion. In her amours she was equally inconstant as ardent, till the young count Hippolitus de Vereza attracted her attention. The natural fickleness of her
dis-

disposition seemed then to cease, and upon him she centered all her desires.

The count Vereza lost his father in early childhood. He was now of age, and had just entered upon the possession of his estates. His person was graceful, yet manly; his mind accomplished, and his manners elegant; his countenance expressed a happy union of spirit, dignity, and benevolence, which formed the principal traits of his character. He had a sublimity of thought, which taught him to despise the voluptuous vices of the Neapolitans, and led him to higher pursuits. He was the chosen and early friend of young Ferdinand, the son of the marquis, and was a frequent visitor in the family. When the marchioness first saw him, she treated him with great distinction, and at length made such advances, as neither the honour nor the inclinations of the count permitted him to notice. He conducted himself toward her with frigid indifference, which served only to inflame the

the passion it was meant to chill. The favours of the marchioness had hitherto been sought with avidity, and accepted with rapture ; and the repulsive insensibility which she now experienced, roused all her pride, and called into action every refinement of coquetry.

It was about this period that Vincent was seized with a disorder which increased so rapidly, as in a short time to assume the most alarming appearance. Despairing of life, he desired that a messenger might be dispatched to inform the marquis of his situation, and to signify his earnest wish to see him before he died. The progress of his disorder defied every art of medicine, and his visible distress of mind seemed to accelerate his fate. Perceiving his last hour approaching, he requested to have a confessor. The confessor was shut up with him a considerable time, and he had already received extreme unction, when madame de Menon was summoned to his bed side. The hand of death

was now upon him, cold damps hung upon his brows, and he, with difficulty, raised his heavy eyes to Madame as she entered the apartment. He beckoned her towards him, and desiring that no person might be permitted to enter the room, was for a few moments silent. His mind appeared to labour under oppressive remembrances ; he made several attempts to speak, but either resolution or strength failed him. At length, giving Madame a look of unutterable anguish, " Alas, madam," said he, " Heaven grants not the prayer of such a wretch as I am. I must expire long before the marquis can arrive. Since I shall see him no more, I would impart to you a secret which lies heavy at my heart, and which makes my last moments dreadful, as they are without hope." " Be comforted," said Madame, who was affected by the energy of his manner, " we are taught to believe that forgiveness is never denied to sincere repentance." " You, madam, are ignorant of the enor-

enormity of my crime, and of the secret—the horrid secret which labours at my breast. My guilt is beyond remedy in this world, and I fear will be without pardon in the next ; I therefore hope little from confession even to a priest. Yet some good it is still in my power to do ; let me disclose to you that secret which is so mysteriously connected with the southern apartments of this castle.” “ What of them ! ” exclaimed Madame, with impatience. Vincent returned no answer ; exhausted by the effort of speaking, he had fainted. Madame rung for assistance, and by proper applications, his senses were recalled. He was, however, entirely speechless, and in this state he remained till he expired, which was about an hour after he had conversed with Madame.

The perplexity and astonishment of Madame, were by the late scene heightened to a very painful degree. She recollected the various particulars relative to the southern division of the

castle—the many years it had stood uninhabited—the silence which had been observed concerning it—the appearance of the light and the figure—the fruitless search for the keys, and the reports so generally believed; and thus remembrance presented her with a combination of circumstances, which served only to increase her wonder, and heighten her curiosity. A veil of mystery enveloped that part of the castle, which it now seemed impossible should ever be penetrated, since the only person who could have removed it, was no more.

The marquis arrived on the day after that on which Vincent had expired. He came attended by servants only, and alighted at the gates of the castle with an air of impatience, and a countenance expressive of strong emotion. Madame, with the young ladies, received him in the hall. He hastily saluted his daughters, and passed on to the oak parlour, desiring Madame to follow

follow him. She obeyed, and the marquis enquired with great agitation after Vincent. When told of his death, he paced the room with hurried steps, and was for some time silent. At length seating himself, and surveying Madame with a scrutinizing eye, he asked some questions concerning the particulars of Vincent's death. She mentioned his earnest desire to see the marquis, and repeated his last words. The marquis remained silent, and Madame proceeded to mention those circumstances relative to the southern division of the castle, which she thought it of so much importance to discover. He treated the affair very lightly, laughed at her conjectures, represented the appearances she described as the illusions of a weak and timid mind, and broke up the conversation, by going to visit the chamber of Vincent, in which he remained a considerable time.

On the following day Emilia and Julia dined with the marquis. He was

gloomy and silent; their efforts to amuse him seemed to excite displeasure rather than kindness; and when the repast was concluded, he withdrew to his own apartment, leaving his daughters in a state of sorrow and surprise.

Vincent was to be interred, according to his own desire, in the church belonging to the convent of St. Nicholas. One of the servants, after receiving some necessary orders concerning the funeral, ventured to inform the marquis of the appearance of the lights in the south tower. He mentioned the superstitious reports that prevailed amongst the household, and complained that the servants would not cross the courts after it was dark. "And who is he that has commissioned you with this story?" said the marquis, in a tone of displeasure; "are the weak and ridiculous fancies of women and servants to be obtruded upon my notice? Away—appear no more before me, till you have learned to speak what it is proper for me to hear."

hear." Robert withdrew abashed, and it was some time before any person ventured to renew the subject with the marquis.

The majority of young Ferdinand now drew near, and the marquis determined to celebrate the occasion with festive magnificence at the castle of Mazzini. He therefore summoned the marchioness and his son, from Naples, and very splendid preparations were ordered to be made. Emilia and Julia dreaded the arrival of the marchioness, whose influence they had long been sensible of, and from whose presence they anticipated a painful restraint. Beneath the gentle guidance of madame de Menon, their hours had passed in happy tranquillity, for they were ignorant alike of the sorrows and the pleasures of the world. Those did not oppress, and these did not inflame them. Engaged in the pursuits of knowledge, and in the attainment of elegant accom-

plishments, their moments flew lightly away, and the flight of time was marked only by improvement. In Madame was united the tenderness of the mother, with the sympathy of a friend; and they loved her with a warm and inviolable affection.

The purposed visit of their brother, whom they had not seen for several years, gave them great pleasure. Although their minds retained no very distinct remembrance of him, they looked forward with eager and delightful expectation to his virtues and his talents; and hoped to find in his company, a consolation for the uneasiness which the presence of the marchioness would excite. Neither did Julia contemplate with indifference the approaching festival. A new scene was now opening to her, which her young imagination painted in the warm and glowing colours of delight. The near approach of pleasure frequently awakens the

the heart to emotions, which would fail to be excited by a more remote and abstracted observance. Julia, who, in the distance, had considered the splendid gaieties of life with tranquillity, now lingered with impatient hope through the moments which withheld her from their enjoyments. Emilia, whose feelings were less lively, and whose imagination was less powerful, beheld the approaching festival with calm consideration, and almost regretted the interruption of those tranquil pleasures, which she knew to be more congenial with her powers and disposition.

In a few days the marchioness arrived at the castle. She was followed by a numerous retinue, and accompanied by Ferdinand, and several of the Italian noblesse, whom pleasure attracted to her train. Her entrance was proclaimed by the sound of music, and those gates which had long rusted on their hinges, were thrown open to receive her. The

courts and halls, whose aspect so lately expressed only gloom and desolation, now shone with sudden splendour, and echoed the sounds of gaiety and gladness. Julia surveyed the scene from an obscure window; and as the triumphal strains filled the air, her breast throbbed, her heart beat quick with joy, and she lost her apprehensions from the marchioness in a sort of wild delight hitherto unknown to her. The arrival of the marchioness seemed indeed the signal of universal and unlimited pleasure. When the marquis came out to receive her, the gloom that lately clouded his countenance, broke away in smiles of welcome, which the whole company appeared to consider as invitations to joy.

The tranquil heart of Emilia was not proof against a scene so alluring, and she sighed at the prospect, yet scarcely knew why. Julia pointed out to her sister, the graceful figure of a young man

man who followed the marchioness, and she expressed her wishes that he might be her brother. From the contemplation of the scene before them, they were summoned to meet the marchioness. Julia trembled with apprehension, and for a few moments wished the castle was in its former state. As they advanced through the saloon, in which they were presented, Julia was covered with blushes; but Emilia, tho' equally timid, preserved her graceful dignity. The marchioness received them with a mingled smile of condescension and politeness, and immediately the whole attention of the company was attracted by their elegance and beauty. The eager eyes of Julia sought in vain to discover her brother, of whose features she had no recollection in those of any of the persons then present. At length her father presented him, and she perceived, with a sigh of regret, that he was not the youth she had observed

from the window. He advanced with a very engaging air, and she met him with an unfeigned welcome. His figure was tall and majestic; he had a very noble and spirited carriage; and his countenance expressed at once sweetness and dignity. Supper was served in the east hall, and the tables were spread with a profusion of delicacies. A band of music played during the repast, and the evening concluded with a concert in the saloon.

CHAPTER II.

THE day of the festival, so long and so impatiently looked for by Julia, was now arrived. All the neighbouring nobility were invited, and the gates of the castle were thrown open for a general rejoicing. A magnificent entertainment, consisting of the most luxurious and expensive dishes, was served in the halls. Soft music floated along the vaulted roofs, the walls were hung with decorations, and it seemed as if the hand of a magician had suddenly metamorphosed this once gloomy fabric into the palace of a fairy. The marquis, notwithstanding the gaiety of the scene, frequently appeared abstracted from its enjoyments, and in spite of all his efforts at cheerfulness, the melancholy of his heart was visible in his countenance.

In the evening there was a grand
ball :

ball: the marchioness, who was still distinguished for her beauty, and for the winning elegance of her manners, appeared in the most splendid attire. Her hair was ornamented with a profusion of jewels, but was so disposed as to give an air rather of voluptuousness, than of grace, to her figure. Although conscious of her charms, she beheld the beauty of Emilia and Julia with a jealous eye, and was compelled secretly to acknowledge, that the simple elegance with which they were adorned, was more enchanting than all the studied artifice of splendid decoration. They were dressed alike in light Sicilian habits, and the beautiful luxuriance of their flowing hair, was restrained only by bandelets of pearl. The ball was opened by Ferdinand, and the lady Matilda Constanza. Emilia danced with the young marquis dello Fazelli, and acquitted herself with the ease and dignity so natural to her. Julia experienced

enced a various emotion of pleasure and
 fear when the count de Vereza, in whom
 she recollected the cavalier she had ob-
 served from the window, led her forth.
 The grace of her step, and the elegant
 symmetry of her figure, raised in the
 assembly a gentle murmur of applause;
 and the soft blush which now stole over
 her cheek, gave an additional charm to
 her appearance. But when the music
 changed, and she danced to the soft Si-
 cilian measure, the airy grace of her
 movement, and the unaffected tender-
 ness of her air, sunk attention into si-
 lence, which continued for some time
 after the dance had ceased. The mar-
 chioness observed the general admira-
 tion with seeming pleasure, and secret
 uneasiness. She had suffered a very
 painful solicitude, when the count de
 Vereza selected her for his partner in
 the dance, and she pursued him through
 the evening with an eye of jealous scru-
 tiny. Her bosom, which before glow-
 ed

ed only with love, was now torn by the agitation of other passions more violent and destructive. Her thoughts were restless, her mind wandered from the scene before her, and it required all her address to preserve an apparent ease. She saw, or fancied she saw, an impassioned air in the count, when he addressed himself to Julia, that corroded her heart with jealous fury.

At twelve the gates of the castle were thrown open, and the company quitted it for the woods, which were splendidly illuminated. Arcades of light lined the long vistas, which were terminated by pyramids of lamps that presented to the eye one bright column of flame. At irregular distances, buildings were erected, hung with variegated lamps, disposed in the gayest and most fantastic forms. Collations were spread under the trees; and music, touched by unseen hands, breathed around. The musicians were placed in the most obscure and

and embowered spots, so as to elude the eye and strike the imagination. The scene appeared enchanted. Nothing met the eye but beauty and romantic splendour; the ear received no sounds but those of mirth and melody. The younger part of the company formed themselves into groups, which at intervals glanced through the woods, and were again unseen. Julia seemed the magic queen of the place. Her heart dilated with pleasure, and diffused over her features an expression of pure and complacent delight. A generous, frank, and exalted sentiment sparkled in her eyes, and animated her manner. Her bosom glowed with benevolent affections; and she seemed anxious to impart to all around her, a happiness as unmixed as that she experienced. Wherever she moved, admiration followed her steps. Ferdinand was as gay as the scene around him. Emilia was pleased; and the marquis seemed to have left his
melan-

melancholy in the castle. The marchioness alone was wretched. She supped with a select party, in a pavilion on the sea shore, which was fitted up with peculiar elegance. It was hung with white silk, drawn up in festoons, and richly fringed with gold. The sofas were of the same materials, and alternate wreaths of lamps and of roses entwined the columns. A row of small lamps placed about the cornice, formed an edge of light round the roof, which, with the other numerous lights, was reflected in a blaze of splendour from the large mirrors that adorned the room. The count Muriani was of the party;—he complimented the marchioness on the beauty of her daughters; and after lamenting with gaiety the captives which their charms would enthrall, he mentioned the count de Vereza. “He is certainly of all others the man most deserving the lady Julia. As they danced, I thought they exhibited a perfect

fect model of the beauty of either sex: and if I mistake not, they are inspired with a mutual admiration." The marchioness, endeavouring to conceal her uneasiness, said, " Yes, my lord, I allow the count all the merit you adjudge him; but from the little I have seen of his disposition, he is too volatile for a serious attachment." At that instant the count entered the pavilion: " Ah," said Muriani, laughingly, " you was the subject of our conversation, and seem to be come in good time to receive the honours allotted you. I was interceding with the marchioness for her interest in your favour, with the lady Julia; but she absolutely refuses it; and though she allows you merit, alledges, that you are by nature fickle and inconstant. What say you—would not the beauty of lady Julia bind your unsteady heart?"

" I know not how I have deserved that character of the marchioness," said
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the count with a smile; "but that heart must be either fickle or insensible in an uncommon degree, which can boast of freedom in the presence of lady Julia." The marchioness, mortified by the whole conversation, now felt the full force of Vereza's reply, which she imagined he pointed with particular emphasis.

The entertainment concluded with a grand firework, which was exhibited on the margin of the sea, and the company did not part till the dawn of morning. Julia retired from the scene with regret. She was enchanted with the new world that was now exhibited to her, and she was not cool enough to distinguish the vivid glow of imagination from the colours of real bliss. The pleasure she now felt, she believed would always be renewed, and in an equal degree, by the objects which first excited it. The weakness of humanity is never willingly perceived by young minds. It is
pains

painful to know, that we are operated upon by objects whose impressions are variable as they are indefinable—and that what yesterday affected us strongly, is to-day but imperfectly felt, and to-morrow perhaps shall be disregarded. When at length this unwelcome truth is received into the mind, we at first reject, with disgust, every appearance of good, we disdain to partake of a happiness which we cannot always command, and we not unfrequently sink into a temporary despair. Wisdom or accident, at length, recalls us from our error, and offers to us some object capable of producing a pleasing, yet lasting effect, which effect, therefore, we call happiness. Happiness has this essential difference from what is commonly called pleasure, that virtue forms its basis; and virtue being the offspring of reason, may be expected to produce uniformity of effect.

The passions which had hitherto lain
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concealed in Julia's heart, touched by circumstance, dilated to its power, and afforded her a slight experience of the pain and delight which flow from their influence. The beauty and accomplishments of Vereza raised in her a new and various emotion, which reflection made her fear to encourage, but which was too pleasing to be wholly resisted. Tremblingly alive to a sense of delight, and unchilled by disappointment, the young heart welcomes every feeling, not simply painful, with a romantic expectation, that it will expand into bliss.

Julia sought with eager anxiety to discover the sentiments of Vereza towards her; she revolved each circumstance of the day, but they afforded her little satisfaction; they reflected only a glimmering and uncertain light, which instead of guiding, served only to perplex her. Now she remembered some instance of particular attention, and then
some

some mark of apparent indifference. She compared his conduct with that of the other young nobleſſe; and thought each appeared equally deſirous of the favour of every lady preſent. All the ladies, however, appeared to her to court the admiration of Vereza, and ſhe trembled leſt he ſhould be too ſenſible of the diſtinction. She drew from theſe reflections no poſitive inference; and though diſtrult rendered pain the pre-dominant ſenſation, it was ſo exquisitely interwoven with delight, that ſhe could not wiſh it exchanged for her former eaſe. Thoughtful and reſtleſs, ſleep fled from her eyes, and ſhe longed with impatience for the morning, which ſhould again preſent Vereza, and enable her to purſue the enquiry. She roſe early, and adorned herſelf with unuſual care. In her favourite cloſet ſhe awaited the hour of breakfaſt, and endeavoured to read, but her thoughts wandered from the ſubject.

Her

Her lute and favourite airs lost half their power to please ; the day seemed to stand still—she became melancholy, and thought the breakfast hour would never arrive. At length the clock struck the signal,—the sound vibrated on every nerve, and trembling she quitted the closet for her sister's apartment. Love taught her disguise. Till then Emilia had shared all her thoughts ; they now descended to the breakfast-room in silence, and Julia almost feared to meet her eye. In the breakfast-room they were alone. Julia found it impossible to support a conversation with Emilia, whose observations interrupting the course of her thoughts, became uninteresting and tiresome. She was therefore about to retire to her closet, when the marquis entered. His air was haughty, and his look severe. He coldly saluted his daughters, and they had scarcely time to reply to his general enquiries, when the marchioness entered,

ed, and the company soon after assembled. Julia, who had awaited with so painful an impatience for the moment which should present Vereza to her sight, now sighed that it was arrived. She scarcely dared to lift her timid eyes from the ground, and when by accident they met his, a soft tremour seized her; and apprehension lest he should discover her sentiments, served only to render her confusion conspicuous. At length a glance from the marchioness recalled her bewildered thoughts; and other fears superceding those of love, her mind, by degrees, recovered its dignity. She could distinguish in the behaviour of Vereza no symptoms of particular admiration, and she resolved to conduct herself towards him with the most scrupulous care.

This day, like the preceding one, was devoted to joy. In the evening there was a concert, which was chiefly performed by the nobility. Ferdinand play-

ed the violoncello, Vereza the German flute, and Julia the piano forte, which she touched with a delicacy and execution that engaged every auditor. The confusion of Julia may be easily imagined, when Ferdinand, selecting a beautiful duet, desired Vereza would accompany his sister. The pride of conscious excellence, however, quickly overcame her timidity, and enabled her to exert all her powers. The air was simple and pathetic, and she gave it those charms of expression so peculiarly her own. She struck the chords of her piano forte in beautiful accompaniment; and towards the close of the second stanza, her voice resting on one note, swelled into a tone so exquisite, and from thence descended to a few simple notes, which she touched with such impassioned tenderness that every eye wept to the sounds. The breath of the flute trembled, and Hippolitus entranced, forgot to play. A pause of
 silence

silence ensued at the conclusion of the piece, and continued till a general sigh seemed to awaken the audience from their enchantment. Amid the general applause, Hippolitus was silent. Julia observed his behaviour, and gently raising her eyes to his, there read the sentiments which she had inspired. An exquisite emotion thrilled her heart, and she experienced one of those rare moments which illuminate life with a ray of bliss, by which the darkness of its general shade is contrasted. Care, doubt, every disagreeable sensation vanished, and for the remainder of the evening she was conscious only of delight. A timid respect marked the manner of Hippolitus, more flattering to Julia than the most ardent professions. The evening concluded with a ball, and Julia was again the partner of the count.

When the ball broke up, she retired to her apartment, but not to sleep. Joy is as restless as anxiety or sorrow. She

seemed to have entered upon a new state of existence;—those fine springs of affection which had hitherto lain concealed, were now touched, and yielded to her a happiness more exalted than any her imagination had ever painted. She reflected on the tranquillity of her past life, and comparing it with the emotions of the present hour, exulted in the difference. All her former pleasures now appeared insipid; she wondered that they ever had power to affect her, and that she had endured with content the dull uniformity to which she had been condemned. It was now only that she appeared to live. Absorbed in the single idea of being beloved, her imagination soared into the regions of romantic bliss, and bore her high above the possibility of evil. Since she was beloved by Hippolitus, she could only be happy.

From this state of entranced delight she was awakened by the sound of music

fic immediately under her window. It was a lute touched by a masterly hand. After a wild and melancholy symphony, a voice of more than magic expression swelled into an air so pathetic and tender, that it seemed to breathe the very soul of love. The chords of the lute were struck in low and sweet accompaniment. Julia listened, and distinguished the following words:

S O N N E T.

STILL is the night-breeze!—not a lonely sound
Steals through the silence of this dreary hour;
O'er these high battlements Sleep reigns profound,
And sheds on all his sweet oblivious power.

On all but me—I vainly ask his dews
To steep in short forgetfulness my cares.
Th' affrighted god still flies when Love pursues,
Still—still denies the wretched lover's prayers.

An interval of silence followed, and the air was repeated; after which the music was heard no more. If before Julia believed that she was loved by

Hippolitus, she was now confirmed in the sweet reality. But sleep at length fell upon her senses, and the airy forms of ideal bliss no longer fled before her imagination. Morning came, and she arose light and refreshed. How different were her present sensations from those of the preceding day. Her anxiety had now evaporated in joy, and she experienced that airy dance of spirits which accumulates delight from every object; and with a power like the touch of enchantment, can transform a gloomy desert into a smiling Eden. She flew to the breakfast-room, scarcely conscious of motion; but, as she entered it, a soft confusion overcame her; she blushed, and almost feared to meet the eyes of Vereza. She was presently relieved, however, for the count was not there. The company assembled—Julia watched the entrance of every person with painful anxiety; but he for whom she looked did not appear. Surprized

prized and uneasy, she fixed her eyes on the door, and whenever it opened, her heart beat with an expectation which was as often checked by disappointment. In spite of all her efforts, her vivacity sunk into languor, and she then perceived that love may produce other sensations than those of delight. She found it possible to be unhappy, though loved by Hippolitus; and acknowledged with a sigh of regret, which was yet new to her, how tremblingly her peace depended upon him. He neither appeared nor was mentioned at breakfast; but though delicacy prevented her enquiring after him, conversation soon became irksome to her, and she retired to the apartment of Madame de Menon. There she employed herself in painting, and endeavoured to beguile the time till the hour of dinner, when she hoped to see Hippolitus. Madame was, as usual, friendly and cheerful, but she perceived a reserve

in the conduct of Julia, and penetrated without difficulty into its cause. She was, however, ignorant of the object of her pupil's admiration. The hour so eagerly desired by Julia at length arrived, and with a palpitating heart she entered the hall. The count was not there, and in the course of conversation, she learned that he had that morning sailed for Naples. The scene which so lately appeared enchanting to her eyes, now changed its hue; and in the midst of society, and surrounded by gaiety, she was solitary and dejected. She accused herself of having suffered her wishes to mislead her judgment; and the present conduct of Hippolitus convinced her, that she had mistaken admiration, for a sentiment more tender. She believed too, that the musician who had addressed her in his sonnet, was not the count; and thus at once was dissolved all the ideal fabrick of her happiness. How short a period often reverses the character

character of our sentiments, rendering that which yesterday we despised, to day desirable. The tranquil state which she had so lately delighted to quit, she now reflected upon with regret. She had, however, the consolation of believing that her sentiments towards the count were unknown, and the sweet consciousness that her conduct had been governed by a nice sense of propriety.

The public rejoicings at the castle closed with the week ; but the gay spirit of the marchioness forbade a return to tranquillity ; and she substituted diversions more private, but in splendour scarcely inferior to the preceding ones. She had observed the behaviour of Hippolitus on the night of the concert with chagrin, and his departure with sorrow ; yet disdaining to perpetuate misfortune by reflection, she sought to lose the sense of disappointment in the hurry of dissipation. But her efforts to erase him from her remembrance were ineffectual.

Unaccustomed to oppose the bent of her inclinations, they now maintained unbounded sway; and she found too late, that in order to have a due command of our passions, it is necessary to subject them to early obedience. Passion, in its undue influence, produces weakness as well as injustice. The pain which now recoiled upon her heart from disappointment, she had not strength of mind to endure, and she sought relief from its pressure in afflicting the innocent. Julia, whose beauty she imagined had captivated the count, and confirmed him in indifference towards herself, she incessantly tormented by the exercise of those various and splanetic little arts which elude the eye of the common observer, and are only to be known by those who have felt them. Arts, which individually are inconsiderable, but in the aggregate, amount to a cruel and decisive effect.

From Julia's mind the idea of happiness

ness was now faded. Pleasure had withdrawn her beam from the prospect, and the objects, no longer illumined by her ray, became dark and colourless. As often as her situation would permit, she withdrew from society, and sought the freedom of solitude, where she could indulge in melancholy thoughts, and give a loose to that despair which is so apt to follow the disappointment of our first hopes.

Week after week elapsed, yet no mention was made of returning to Naples. The marquis at length declared it his intention to spend the remainder of the summer in the castle. To this determination the marchioness submitted with decent resignation, for she was here surrounded by a croud of flatterers, and her invention supplied her with continual diversions: that gaiety which rendered Naples so dear to her, glittered in the woods of Mazzini, and resounded through the castle.

The apartments of Madame de Menon were spacious and noble. The windows opened upon the sea, and commanded a view of the straits of Messina, bounded on one side by the beautiful shores of the isle of Sicily, and on the other by the high mountains of Calabria. The straits, filled with vessels, whose gay streamers glittered to the sun beam, presented to the eye an ever moving scene. The principal room opened upon a gallery that overhung the grand terrace of the castle, and it commanded a prospect which for beauty and extent has seldom been equalled. These were formerly considered the chief apartments of the castle ; and when the Marquis quitted them for Naples, were allotted for the residence of Madame de Menon, and her young charge. The marchioness, struck with the prospect which the windows afforded, and with the pleasantness of the gallery, determined to restore the rooms to their former

mer splendour. She signified this intention to Madame, for whom other apartments were provided. The chambers of Emilia and Julia forming part of the suite, they were also claimed by the marchioness, who left Julia only her favourite closet. The rooms to which they removed, were spacious, but gloomy; they had been for some years uninhabited; and though preparations had been made for the reception of their new inhabitants, an air of desolation reigned within them that inspired melancholy sensations. Julia observed that her chamber, which opened beyond Madame's, formed a part of the southern building, with which, however, there appeared no means of communication. The late mysterious circumstances relating to this part of the fabric, now arose to her imagination, and conjured up a terror which reason could not subdue. She told her emotions to Madame, who, with more prudence than sincerity, laughed

laughed at her fears. The behaviour of the marquis, the dying words of Vincent, together with the preceding circumstances of alarm, had sunk deep in the mind of Madame ; but she saw the necessity of confining to her own breast, doubts which time only could resolve.

Julia endeavoured to reconcile herself to the change, and a circumstance soon occurred which obliterated her present sensations, and excited others far more interesting. One day that she was arranging some papers in the small drawers of a cabinet that stood in her apartment, she found a picture which fixed all her attention. It was a miniature of a lady, whose countenance was touched with sorrow, and expressed an air of dignified resignation. The mournful sweetness of her eyes, raised towards Heaven with a look of supplication, and the melancholy languor that shaded her features, so deeply affected

fected Julia, that her eyes were filled
 with involuntary tears. She sighed and
 wept, still gazing on the picture, which
 seemed to engage her by a kind of
 fascination. She almost fancied that
 the portrait breathed, and that the eyes
 were fixed on her's with a look of pene-
 trating softness. Full of the emotions
 which the miniature had excited, she
 presented it to Madame, whose mingled
 sorrow and surprize increased her
 curiosity. But what were the various
 sensations which pressed upon her heart,
 on learning that she had wept over the
 resemblance of her mother ! Deprived
 of a mother's tenderness before she
 was sensible of its value, it was now
 only that she mourned the event which
 lamentation could not recall. Emilia,
 with an emotion as exquisite, mingled
 her tears with those of her sister. With
 eager impatience they pressed Madame
 to disclose the cause of that sorrow
 which so emphatically marked the fea-
 tures of their mother.

“ Alas !

“ Alas ! my dear children,” said Madame, deeply sighing, “ you engage me in a task too severe, not only for your peace, but for mine ; since, in giving you the information you require, I must retrace scenes of my own life, which I wish for ever obliterated. It would, however, be both cruel and unjust to with-hold an explanation so nearly interesting to you, and I will sacrifice my own ease to your wishes.

“ Louisa de Bernini, your mother, was, as you well know, the only daughter of the count de Bernini. Of the misfortunes of your family, I believe you are yet ignorant. The chief estates of the count were situated in the *Val di Demona*, a valley deriving its name from its vicinity to Mount *Ætna*, which vulgar tradition has peopled with devils. In one of those dreadful eruptions of *Ætna*, which deluged this valley with a flood of fire, a great part of your grandfather’s domains in that quarter

were

were laid waste. The count was at that time with a part of his family at Messina, but the countess and her son, who were in the country, were destroyed. The remaining property of the count was proportionably inconsiderable, and the loss of his wife and son deeply affected him. He retired with Louisa, his only surviving child, who was then near fifteen, to a small estate near Catania. There was some degree of relationship between your grandfather and myself; and your mother was attached to me by the ties of sentiment, which, as we grew up, united us still more strongly than those of blood. Our pleasures and our tastes were the same; and a similarity of misfortunes might, perhaps, contribute to cement our early friendship. I, like herself, had lost a parent in the eruption of *Ætna*. My mother had died before I understood her value, but my father, whom I revered and tenderly loved, was destroyed by

by one of those terrible events ; his lands were buried beneath the lava, and he left an only son and myself to mourn his fate, and encounter the evils of poverty. The count, who was our nearest surviving relation, generously took us home to his house, and declared that he considered us as his children. To amuse his leisure hours, he undertook to finish the education of my brother, who was then about seventeen, and whose rising genius promised to reward the labours of the count. Louisa and myself often shared the instruction of her father, and at those hours Orlando was generally of the party. The tranquil retirement of the count's situation, the rational employment of his time between his own studies, the education of those whom he called his children, and the conversation of a few select friends, anticipated the effect of time, and softened the asperities of his distress into a tender, complacent melancholy. As for Louisa
and

and myself, who were yet new in life, and whose spirits possessed the happy elasticity of youth, our minds gradually shifted from suffering to tranquillity, and from tranquillity to happiness. I have sometimes thought, that when my brother has been reading to her a delightful passage, the countenance of Louisa discovered a tender interest, which seemed to be excited rather by the reader than by the author. These days, which were surely the most enviable of our lives, now passed in serene enjoyments, and in continual gradations of improvement.

“ The count designed my brother for the army, and the time now drew nigh when he was to join the Sicilian regiment, in which he had a commission. The absent thoughts, and dejected spirits of my cousin, now discovered to me the secret which had long been concealed even from herself; for it was not till Orlando was about to depart, that she perceived how dear he was to her

her peace. On the eve of his departure, the count lamented with fatherly, yet manly tenderness, the distance which was soon to separate us. "But we shall meet again," said he, "when the honours of war shall have rewarded the bravery of my son. Louisa grew pale, a half-suppressed sigh escaped her, and to conceal her emotion, she turned to her harpsichord.

"My brother had a favourite dog, which, before he set off, he presented to Julia, and committing it to her care, begged she would be kind to it, and sometimes remember its master. He checked his rising emotion, but as he turned from her, I perceived the tear that wetted his cheek. He departed, and with him the spirit of our happiness seemed to evaporate. The scenes which his presence had formerly enlivened, were now forlorn and melancholy, yet we loved to wander in what were once his favourite haunts. Louisa forbore

forbore to mention my brother even to me, but frequently, when she thought herself unobserved, she would steal to her harpsichord, and repeat the strain which she had played on the evening before his departure.

“ We had the pleasure to hear from time to time that he was well; and though his own modesty threw a veil over his conduct, we could collect from other accounts that he had behaved with great bravery. At length the time of his return approached, and the enlivened spirits of Julia declared the influence he retained in her heart. He returned, bearing public testimony of his valour in the honours which had been conferred upon him. He was received with universal joy; the count welcomed him with the pride and fondness of a father, and the villa became again the seat of happiness. His person and manners were much improved; the elegant beauty of the youth was
now

now exchanged for the graceful dignity of manhood, and some knowledge of the world was added to that of the sciences. The joy which illumined his countenance when he met Julia, spoke at once his admiration and his love; and the blush which her observation of it brought upon her cheek, would have discovered even to an uninterested spectator that this joy was mutual.

“ Orlando brought with him a young Frenchman, a brother officer, who had rescued him from imminent danger in battle, and whom he introduced to the count as his preserver. The count received him with gratitude and distinction, and he was for a considerable time an inmate at the villa. His manners were singularly pleasing, and his understanding was cultivated and refined. He soon discovered a partiality for me, and he was indeed too pleasing to be seen with indifference. Gratitude for the

the valuable life he had preserved, was perhaps the ground work of an esteem which soon increased into the most affectionate love. Our attachment grew stronger as our acquaintance increased; and at length the chevalier de Menon asked me of the count, who consulted my heart, and finding it favourable to the connection, proceeded to make the necessary enquiries concerning the family of the stranger. He obtained a satisfactory and pleasing account of it. The chevalier was the second son of a French gentleman of large estates in France, who had been some years deceased. He had left several sons; the family estate, of course, devolved to the eldest, but to the two younger he had bequeathed considerable property. Our marriage was solemnized in a private manner at the villa, in the presence of the count, Louisa, and my brother. Soon after the nuptials, my husband and Orlando were remanded

ed to their regiments. My brother's affections were now unalterably fixed upon Louisa, but a sentiment of delicacy and generosity still kept him silent. He thought, poor as he was, to solicit the hand of Louisa, would be to repay the kindness of the count with ingratitude. I have seen the inward struggles of his heart, and mine has bled for him. The count and Louisa so earnestly solicited me to remain at the villa during the campaign. that at length my husband consented. We parted—O! let me forget that period!—Had I accompanied him, all might have been well; and the long, long years of affliction which followed had been spared me.”

The horn now sounded the signal for dinner, and interrupted the narrative of Madame. Her beauteous auditors wiped the tears from their eyes, and with extreme reluctance descended to the hall. The day was occupied with company and diversions, and it

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was not till late in the evening that they were suffered to retire. They hastened to Madame immediately upon their being released; and too much interested for sleep, and too importunate to be repulsed, solicited the sequel of her story. She objected the lateness of the hour, but at length yielded to their entreaties. They drew their chairs close to her's; and every sense being absorbed in the single one of hearing, followed her through the course of her narrative.

“ My brother again departed without disclosing his sentiments; the effort it cost him was evident, but his sense of honour surmounted every opposing consideration. Louisa again drooped, and pined in silent sorrow. I lamented equally for my friend and my brother; and have a thousand times accused that delicacy as false, which withheld them from the happiness they might so easily and so innocently have obtained. The

behaviour of the count, at least to my eye, seemed to indicate the satisfaction which this union would have given him. It was about this period that the marquis Mazzini first saw and became enamoured of Louisa. His proposals were very flattering, but the count forbore to exert the undue authority of a father; and he ceased to press the connection, when he perceived that Louisa was really averse to it. Louisa was sensible of the generosity of his conduct, and she could scarcely reject the alliance without a sigh, which her gratitude paid to the kindness of her father.

“ But an event now happened which dissolved at once our happiness, and all our air drawn schemes for futurity. A dispute, which it seems originated in a trifle, but soon increased to a serious degree, arose between the *Chevalier de Menon* and my brother. It was decided by the sword, and my dear brother fell by the hand of my husband. I shall
pass

pass over this period of my life. It is too painful for recollection. The effect of this event upon Louisa was such as may be imagined. The world was now become indifferent to her, and as she had no prospect of happiness for herself, she was unwilling to withhold it from the father who had deserved so much of her. After some time, when the marquis renewed his addresses, she gave him her hand. The characters of the marquis and his lady were in their nature too opposite to form a happy union. Of this Louisa was very soon sensible; and though the mildness of her disposition made her tamely submit to the unfeeling authority of her husband, his behaviour sunk deep in her heart, and she pined in secret. It was impossible for her to avoid opposing the character of the marquis to that of him upon whom her affections had been so fondly and so justly fixed. The comparison increased her sufferings, which

soon preyed upon her constitution, and very visibly affected her health. Her situation deeply afflicted the count, and united with the infirmities of age to shorten his life.

“ Upon his death, I bade adieu to my cousin, and quitted Sicily for Italy, where the Chevalier de Menon had for some time expected me. Our meeting was very affecting. My resentment towards him was done away, when I observed his pale and altered countenance, and perceived the melancholy which preyed upon his heart. All the airy vivacity of his former manner was fled, and he was devoured by unavailing grief and remorse. He deplored with unceasing sorrow the friend he had murdered, and my presence seemed to open afresh the wounds which time had begun to close. His affliction, united with my own, was almost more, than I could support, but I was doomed to suffer, and endure yet more.

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In a subsequent engagement my husband, weary of existence, rushed into the heat of battle, and there obtained an honourable death. In a paper which he left behind him, he said it was his intention to die in that battle; that he had long wished for death, and waited for an opportunity of obtaining it without staining his own character by the cowardice of suicide, or distressing me by an act of butchery. This event gave the finishing stroke to my afflictions;—yet let me retract:—another misfortune awaited me when I least expected one. The *Chevalier de Menon* died without a will, and his brothers refused to give up his estate, unless I could produce a witness of my marriage. I returned to Sicily, and to my inexpressible sorrow found that your mother had died during my stay abroad, a prey, I fear, to grief. The priest who performed the ceremony of my marriage, having been threatened with

punishment for some ecclesiastical offences, had secretly left the country ; and thus was I deprived of those proofs which were necessary to authenticate my claims to the estates of my husband. His brothers, to whom I was an utter stranger, were either too prejudiced to believe, or believing, were too dishonourable to acknowledge the justice of my claims. I was therefore at once abandoned to sorrow and to poverty ; a small legacy from the count de Bernini being all that now remained to me.

“ When the marquis married Maria de Vellorno, which was about this period, he designed to quit Mazzini for Naples. His son was to accompany him, but it was his intention to leave you, who were both very young, to the care of some person qualified to superintend your education. My circumstances rendered the office acceptable, and my former friendship for your mother

ther

ther made the duty pleasing to me. The marquis was, I believe, glad to be spared the trouble of searching further for what he had hitherto found it difficult to obtain—a person whom inclination as well as duty would bind to his interest.”

Madame ceased to speak, and Emilia and Julia wept to the memory of the mother, whose misfortunes this story recorded. The sufferings of Madame, together with her former friendship for the late marchioness, endeared her to her pupils, who from this period endeavoured by every kind and delicate attention to obliterate the traces of her sorrows. Madame was sensible of this tenderness, and it was productive in some degree of the effect desired. But a subject soon after occurred, which drew off their minds from the consideration of their mother's fate to a subject more wonderful and equally interesting.

One night that Emilia and Julia had been detained, by company, in ceremonial restraint, later than usual, they were induced by the easy conversation of Madame, and by the pleasure which a return to liberty naturally produces, to defer the hour of repose till the night was far advanced. They were engaged in interesting discourse, when Madame, who was then speaking, was interrupted by a low hollow sound, which arose from beneath the apartment, and seemed like the closing of a door. Chilled into a silence, they listened and distinctly heard it repeated. Deadly ideas crowded upon their imaginations, and inspired a terror which scarcely allowed them to breathe. The noise lasted only for a moment, and a profound silence soon ensued. Their feelings at length relaxed, and suffered them to move to Emilia's apartment, when again they heard the same sounds. Almost distracted with fear, they rushed into Madame's apartment,

ment, where Emilia sunk upon the bed and fainted. It was a considerable time ere the efforts of Madame recalled her to sensation. When they were again tranquil, she employed all her endeavours to compose the spirits of the young ladies, and dissuade them from alarming the castle. Involved in dark and fearful doubts, she yet commanded her feelings, and endeavoured to assume an appearance of composure. The late behaviour of the marquis had convinced her that he was nearly connected with the mystery which hung over this part of the edifice; and she dreaded to excite his resentment by a further mention of alarms, which were perhaps only ideal, and whose reality she had certainly no means of proving.

Influenced by these considerations, she endeavoured to prevail on Emilia and Julia, to await in silence some confirmation of their surmises; but their terror made this a very difficult task.

They acquiesced, however, so far with her wishes, as to agree to conceal the preceding circumstances from every person but their brother, without whose protecting presence they declared it utterly impossible to pass another night in the apartments. For the remainder of this night they resolved to watch. To beguile the tediousness of the time, they endeavoured to converse; but the minds of Emilia and Julia were too much affected by the late occurrence to wander from the subject. They compared this with the foregoing circumstance of the figure and the light which had appeared; their imaginations kindled wild conjectures, and they submitted their opinions to Madame, entreating her to inform them sincerely, whether she believed that disembodied spirits were ever permitted to visit this earth.

“ My children,” said she, “ I will not attempt to persuade you that the existence

existence of such spirits is impossible: Who shall say that any thing is impossible to God? We know that he has made us, who are embodied spirits; he, therefore, can make unembodied spirits. If we cannot understand how such spirits exist, we should consider the limited powers of our minds, and that we can not understand many things which are indisputably true. No one yet knows why the magnetic needle points to the north; yet you, who have never seen a magnet, do not hesitate to believe that it has this tendency, because you have been well assured of it, both from books and in conversation. Since, therefore, we are sure that nothing is impossible to God, and that such beings *may* exist, though we can not tell how, we ought to consider by what evidence their existence is supported. I do not say that spirits *have* appeared; but if several discreet, unprejudiced persons were to assure me that

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they

they had seen one, I should not be proud or bold enough to reply—"it is impossible." Let not, however, such considerations disturb your minds. I have said thus much, because I was unwilling to impose upon your understandings; it is now your part to exercise your reason, and preserve the unmoved confidence of virtue. Such spirits, if indeed they have ever been seen, can have appeared only by the express permission of God, and for some very singular purposes; be assured that there are no beings who act unseen by him; and that, therefore, there are none from whom innocence can ever suffer harm."

No further sounds disturbed them for that time; and before the morning dawned, weariness insensibly overcame apprehension, and sunk them in repose.

When Ferdinand learned the circumstances relative to the southern side of the castle, his imagination seized with avidity each appearance of mystery,
and

and inspired him with an irresistible desire to penetrate the secrets of this desolate part of the fabrick. He very readily consented to watch with his sisters in Julia's apartment; but as his chamber was in a remote part of the castle, there would be some difficulty in passing unobserved to her's. It was agreed however, that when all was hushed, he should make the attempt. Having thus resolved, Emilia and Julia waited the return of night with restless and fearful impatience.

At length the family retired to rest. The castle clock had struck one, and Julia began to fear that Ferdinand had been discovered, when a knocking was heard at the door of the outer chamber.

Her heart beat with apprehensions, which reason could not justify. Madame rose, and enquiring who was there, was answered by the voice of Ferdinand. The door was cheerfully opened. They drew their chairs round him, and endeavoured

deavoured to pass the time in conversation; but fear and expectation attracted all their thoughts to one subject, and Madame alone preserved her composure. The hour was now come when the sounds had been heard the preceding night, and every ear was given to attention. All, however, remained quiet, and the night passed without any new alarm.

The greater part of several succeeding nights were spent in watching, but no sounds disturbed their silence. Ferdinand, in whose mind the late circumstances had excited a degree of astonishment and curiosity superior to common obstacles, determined, if possible, to gain admittance to those recesses of the castle which had for so many years been hid from human eye. This, however, was a design which he saw little probability of accomplishing, for the keys of that part of the edifice were in the possession of the marquis, of whose late

late conduct he judged too well to believe he would suffer the apartments to be explored. He racked his invention for the means of getting access to them, and at length recollecting that Julia's chamber formed a part of these buildings, it occurred to him, that according to the mode of building in old times, there might formerly have been a communication between them. This consideration suggested to him the possibility of a concealed door in her apartment, and he determined to survey it on the following night with great care.

CHAPTER III.

THE castle was buried in sleep when Ferdinand again joined his sisters in Madame's apartment. With anxious curiosity they followed him to the chamber. The room was hung with tapestry. Ferdinand carefully sounded the wall which communicated with the southern buildings. From one part of it a sound was returned, which convinced him there was something less solid than stone. He removed the tapestry, and behind it appeared, to his inexpressible satisfaction, a small door. With a hand trembling through eagerness, he undrew the bolts, and was rushing forward, when he perceived that a lock with-held his passage. The keys of Madame and his sisters were applied in vain, and he was compelled to submit to disappointment at the very moment when he congratulated himself

self on success, for he had with him no means of forcing the door.

He stood gazing on the door, and inwardly lamenting, when a low hollow sound was heard from beneath. Emilia and Julia seized his arm; and almost sinking with apprehension, listened in profound silence. A footstep was distinctly heard, as if passing through the apartment below, after which all was still. Ferdinand, fired by this confirmation of the late report, rushed on to the door, and again tried to burst his way, but it resisted all the efforts of his strength. The ladies now rejoiced in that circumstance which they so lately lamented; for the sounds had renewed their terror, and though the night passed without further disturbance, their fears were very little abated.

Ferdinand, whose mind was wholly occupied with wonder, could with difficulty await the return of night. Emilia and Julia were scarcely less impatient.

ent. They counted the minutes as they passed; and when the family retired to rest, hastened with palpitating hearts to the apartment of Madame. They were soon after joined by Ferdinand, who brought with him tools for cutting away the lock of the door. They paused a few moments in the chamber in fearful silence, but no sound disturbed the stillness of night. Ferdinand applied a knife to the door, and in a short time separated the lock. The door yielded, and disclosed a large and gloomy gallery. He took a light. Emilia and Julia, fearful of remaining in the chamber, resolved to accompany him, and each seizing an arm of Madame, they followed in silence. The gallery was in many parts falling to decay, the ceiling was broke, and the window shutters shattered, which, together with the dampness of the walls, gave the place an air of wild desolation.

They passed lightly on, for their steps

ran.

ran in whispering echoes through the gallery, and often did Julia cast a fearful glance around.

The gallery terminated in a large old stair-case, which led to a hall below; on the left appeared several doors which seemed to lead to separate apartments. While they hesitated which course to pursue, a light flashed faintly up the stair-case, and in a moment after passed away; at the same time was heard the sound of a distant footstep. Ferdinand drew his sword and sprang forward; his companions screaming with terror, ran back to Madame's apartment.

Ferdinand descended a large vaulted hall; he crossed it towards a low arched door which was left half open, and through which streamed a ray of light. The door opened upon a narrow winding passage; he entered, and the light retiring, was quickly lost in the windings of the place. Still he went on. The passage grew narrower, and the frequent frag-

fragments of loose stone, made it now difficult to proceed. A low door closed the avenue, resembling that by which he had entered. He opened it, and discovered a square room, from whence rose a winding stair-case, which led up the south tower of the castle. Ferdinand paused to listen; the sound of steps was ceased, and all was profoundly silent. A door on the right attracted his notice; he tried to open it, but it was fastened. He concluded, therefore, that the person, if indeed a human being it was that bore the light he had seen, had passed up the tower. After a momentary hesitation, he determined to ascend the stair case, but, its ruinous condition made this an adventure of some difficulty. The steps were decayed and broken, and the looseness of the stones rendered a footing very insecure. Impelled by an irresistible curiosity, he was undismayed, and began the ascent. He had not proceeded very far, when the

stones

stones of a step which his foot had just quitted, loosened by his weight, gave way; and dragging with them those adjoining, formed a chasm in the staircase that terrified even Ferdinand, who was left tottering on the suspended half of the steps, in momentary expectation of falling to the bottom with the stone on which he rested. In the terror which this occasioned, he attempted to save himself by catching at a kind of beam which projected over the stairs, when the lamp dropped from his hand, and he was left in total darkness. Terror now usurped the place of every other interest, and he was utterly perplexed how to proceed. He feared to go on, lest the steps above, as infirm as those below, should yield to his weight;—to return was impracticable, for the darkness precluded the possibility of discovering a means. He determined, therefore, to remain in this situation till light should dawn through the narrow grates in the walls,

walls, and enable him to contrive some method of letting himself down to the ground.

He had remained here above an hour, when he suddenly heard a voice from below. It seemed to come from the passage leading to the tower, and perceptibly drew nearer. His agitation was now extreme, for he had no power of defending himself, and while he remained in the state of torturing expectation, a blaze of light burst upon the stair-case beneath him. In the succeeding moment he heard his own name sounded from below. His apprehensions instantly vanished, for he distinguished the voices of Madame and his sisters.

They had awaited his return in all the horrors of apprehension, till at length all fear for themselves was lost in their concern for him; and they, who so lately had not dared to enter this part of the edifice, now undauntedly searched it in quest of Ferdinand. What
were

were their emotions when they discovered his perilous situation !

The light now enabled him to take a more accurate survey of the place. He perceived that some few stones of the steps which had fallen, still remained attached to the wall, but he feared to trust to their support only. He observed, however, that the wall itself was partly decayed, and consequently rugged with the corners of half worn stones. On these small projections he contrived, with the assistance of the steps already mentioned, to suspend himself, and at length gained the unbroken part of the stairs in safety. It is difficult to determine which individual of the party rejoiced most at this escape. The morning now dawned, and Ferdinand desisted for the present from farther enquiry.

The interest which these mysterious circumstances excited in the mind of Julia, had with-drawn her attention from a subject more dangerous to its peace. The image of Vereza, notwithstanding,

standing, would frequently intrude upon her fancy; and awakening the recollection of happy emotions, would call forth a sigh which all her efforts could not suppress. She loved to indulge the melancholy of her heart in the solitude of the woods. One evening she took her lute to a favorite spot on the sea shore, and resigning herself to a pleasing sadness, touched some sweet and plaintive airs. The purple flush of evening was diffused over the heavens. The sun, involved in clouds of splendid and innumerable hues, was setting o'er the distant waters, whose clear bosom glowed with rich reflection. The beauty of the scene, the soothing murmur of the high trees, waved by the light air which overshadowed her, and the soft shelling of the waves that flowed gently in upon the shores, insensibly sunk her mind into a state of repose. She touched the chords of her lute in sweet and wild melody, and sung the following ode :

EVEN-

EVENING.

EVENING veil'd in dewy shades,

Slowly sinks upon the main ;

See th' empurpled glory fades,

Beneath her sober, chasten'd reign.

Around her ear the pensive Hours,

In sweet illapses meet the fight,

Crown'd their brows with closing flow'rs,

Rich with chrystal dew's of night.

Her hands, the dusky hues arrange

O'er the fine tints of parting day ;

Insensibly the colours change,

And languish into soft decay.

Wide o'er the waves her shadowy veil she draws,

As faint they die along the distant shores ;

Through the still air I mark each solemn pause,

Each rising murmur which the wild wave pours.

A browner shadow spreads upon the air,

And o'er the scene a pensive grandeur throws ;

The rocks—the woods a wilder beauty wear,

And the deep wave in softer music flows,

And now the distant view where vision fails

Twilight and grey obscurity pervade ;

Tint following tint each dark'ning object veils,

Till all the landscape sinks into the shade.

Oft from the airy steep of some lone hill,
 While sleeps the scene beneath the purple glow;
 And evening lives o'er all serene and still,
 Wrapt let me view the magic world below!

And catch the dying gale that swells remote,
 That steals the sweetness from the shepherd's flute;
 The distant torrent's melancholy note
 And the soft warblings of the lover's lute.

Still through the deep'ning gloom of bow'ry shades
 To Fancy's eye fantastic forms appear;
 Low whisp'ring echoes steal along the glades
 And thrill the ear with wildly-pleasing fear.

Parent of shades!—of silence!—dewy airs!
 Of solemn musing, and of vision wild!
 To thee my soul her pensive tribute bears,
 And hails thy gradual step, thy influence mild.

Having ceased to sing, her fingers
 wandered over the lute in melancholy
 symphony, and for some moments she
 remained lost in the sweet sensations
 which the music and the scenery had
 inspired. She was awakened from her
 reverie, by a sigh that stole from among
 the trees, and directing her eyes whence
 it came, beheld—Hippolitus! A thou-
 sand

and sweet and mingled emotions pressed upon her heart, yet she scarcely dared to trust the evidence of sight. He advanced, and throwing himself at her feet, "Suffer me," said he, in a tremulous voice, "to disclose to you the sentiments which you have inspired, and to offer you the effusions of a heart filled only with love and admiration."

"Rise, my lord," said Julia, moving from her seat with an air of dignity, "that attitude is neither becoming you to use, or me to suffer. The evening is closing, and Ferdinand will be impatient to see you."

"Never will I rise, Madam," replied the count, with an impassioned air, till"—He was interrupted by the marchioness, who at this moment entered the grove. On observing the position of the count, she was retiring—"Stay, Madam," said Julia, almost sinking under her confusion. "By no
F 2 means,"

means," replied the marchioness, in a tone of irony, " my presence would only interrupt a very agreeable scene. The count, I see, is willing to pay you his earliest respects." Saying this she disappeared, leaving Julia distressed and offended, and the count provoked at the intrusion. He attempted to renew the subject, but Julia hastily followed the steps of the marchioness, and entered the castle.

The scene she had witnessed, raised in the marchioness a tumult of dreadful emotions. Love, hatred, and jealousy, raged by turns in her heart, and defied all power of controul. Subjected to their alternate violence, she experienced a misery more acute than any she had yet known. Her imagination, invigorated by opposition, heightened to her the graces of Hippolitus ; her bosom glowed with more intense passion, and her brain was at length exasperated almost to madness.

In

In Julia this sudden and unexpected interview excited a mingled emotion of love and vexation, which did not soon subside. At length, however, the delightful consciousness of Vereza's love bore her high above every other sensation; again the scene more brightly glowed, and again her fancy overcame the possibility of evil.

During the evening a tender and timid respect distinguished the behaviour of the count towards Julia, who, contented with the certainty of being loved, resolved to conceal her sentiments till an explanation of his abrupt departure from Mazzini, and subsequent absence, should have dissipated the shadow of mystery which hung over this part of his conduct. She observed that the marchioness pursued her with steady and constant observation, and she carefully avoided affording the count an opportunity of renewing the subject of the preceding interview, which, when-

ever he approached her, seemed to tremble on his lips.

Night returned, and Ferdinand repaired to the chamber of Julia to pursue his enquiry. Here he had not long remained, when the strange and alarming sounds which had been heard on the preceding night were repeated. The circumstance that now sunk in terror the minds of Emilia and Julia, fired with new wonder that of Ferdinand, who seizing a light, darted through the discovered door, and almost instantly disappeared.

He descended into the same wild hall he had passed on the preceding night. He had scarcely reached the bottom of the stair-case, when a feeble light gleamed across the hall, and his eye caught the glimpse of a figure retiring through the low arched door which led to the south tower. He drew his sword and rushed on. A faint sound died away along the passage, the windings of which

which prevented his seeing the figure he pursued. Of this, indeed, he had obtained so slight a view, that he scarcely knew whether it bore the impression of a human form. The light quickly disappeared, and he heard the door that opened upon the tower suddenly close. He reached it, and forcing it open, sprang forward; but the place was dark and solitary, and there was no appearance of any person having passed along it. He looked up the tower, and the chasm which the stair-case exhibited, convinced him that no human being could have passed up. He stood silent and amazed; examining the place with an eye of strict enquiry, he perceived a door, which was partly concealed by hanging stairs, and which till now had escaped his notice. Hope invigorated curiosity, but his expectation was quickly disappointed, for this door also was fastened. He tried in vain to force it. He knocked, and a

hollow, fullen found ran in echoes through the place, and died away at a distance. It was evident that beyond this door were chambers of considerable extent; but after long and various attempts to reach them, he was obliged to desist, and he quitted the tower as ignorant and more dissatisfied than he had entered it. He returned to the hall, which he now for the first time deliberately surveyed. It was a spacious and desolate apartment, whose lofty roof rose into arches supported by pillars of black marble. The same substance inlaid the floor, and formed the stair-case. The windows were high and gothic. An air of proud sublimity, united with singular wildness, characterized the place, at the extremity of which arose several gothic arches, whose dark shade veiled in obscurity the extent beyond. On the left hand appeared two doors, each of which was fastened, and on the right the grand entrance.

trance from the courts, Ferdinand determined to explore the dark recess which terminated his view, and as he traversed the hall, his imagination, affected by the surrounding scene, often multiplied the echoes of his footsteps into uncertain sounds of strange and fearful import.

He reached the arches, and discovered beyond a kind of inner hall of considerable extent, which was closed at the farther end by a pair of massy folding doors, heavily ornamented with carving. They were fastened by a lock, and defied his utmost strength.

As he surveyed the place in silent wonder, a sullen groan arose from beneath the spot where he stood. His blood ran cold at the sound, but silence returning, and continuing unbroken, he attributed his alarm to the illusion of a fancy, which terror had impregnated. He made another effort to force the door, when a groan was repeated more

hollow, and more dreadful than the first. At this moment all his courage forsook him; he quitted the door, and hastened to the stair-case, which he ascended almost breathless with terror.

He found Madame de Menon and his sisters awaiting his return in the most painful anxiety; and, thus disappointed in all his endeavours to penetrate the secret of these buildings, and fatigued with fruitless search, he resolved to suspend farther enquiry.

When he related the circumstances of his late adventure, the terror of Emilia and Julia was heightened to a degree that overcame every prudent consideration. Their apprehension of the marquis's displeasure, was lost in a stronger feeling, and they resolved no longer to remain in apartments which offered only terrific images to their fancy. Madame de Menon, almost equally alarmed, and more perplexed, by this combination of strange and unaccountable cir-

circumstances, ceased to oppose their design. It was resolved, therefore, that on the following day, Madame should acquaint the marchioness with such particulars of the late occurrences as their purpose made it necessary she should know, concealing their knowledge of the hidden door, and the incidents immediately dependant on it; and that Madame should entreat a change of apartments.

Madame accordingly waited on the marchioness. The marchioness, having listened to the account at first with surprise, and afterwards with indifference, condescended to reprove Madame for encouraging superstitious belief in the minds of her young charge. She concluded with ridiculing as fanciful the circumstances related, and with refusing, on account of the numerous visitants at the castle, the request preferred to her.

It is true, the castle was crouded with

visitors; the former apartments of Madame de Menon were the only ones unoccupied, and these were in magnificent preparation for the pleasure of the marchioness, who was unaccustomed to sacrifice her own wishes to the comfort of those around her. She therefore treated lightly the subject, which, seriously attended to, would have endangered her new plan of delight.

But Emilia and Julia were too seriously terrified to obey the scruples of delicacy, or to be easily repulsed. They prevailed on Ferdinand to represent their situation to the marquis.

Meanwhile Hippolitus, who had passed the night in a state of sleepless anxiety, watched, with busy impatience, an opportunity of more fully disclosing to Julia the passion which glowed in his heart. The first moment in which he beheld her, had awakened in him an admiration, which had since ripened into a sentiment more tender. He had
been

been prevented formally declaring his passion by the circumstance which so suddenly called him to Naples. This was the dangerous illness of the marquis de Lomelli, his near and much-valued relation. But it was a task too painful to depart in silence, and he contrived to inform Julia of his sentiments in the air which she heard so sweetly sung beneath her window.

When Hippolitus reached Naples, the marquis was yet living, but expired a few days after his arrival, leaving the count heir to the small possessions which remained from the extravagance of their ancestors.

The business of adjusting his rights had till now detained him from Sicily, whither he came for the sole purpose of declaring his love. Here unexpected obstacles awaited him. The jealous vigilance of the marchioness, conspired with the delicacy of Julia, to withhold from him the opportunity he so anxiously sought.

When

When Ferdinand entered upon the subject of the southern buildings to the marquis, he carefully avoided mentioning the hidden door. The marquis listened for some time to the relation in gloomy silence ; but at length assuming an air of displeasure, reprehended Ferdinand for yielding his confidence to those idle alarms, which, he said, were the suggestions of a timid imagination. " Alarms," continued he, " which will readily find admittance to the weak mind of a woman, but which the firmer nature of man should disdain. Degenerate boy ! Is it thus you reward my care ? Do I live to see my son the sport of every idle tale a woman may repeat ? Learn to trust reason and your senses, and you will then be worthy of my attention."

The marquis was retiring, and Ferdinand now perceived it necessary to declare, that he had himself witnessed the sounds he mentioned. " Pardon me, my

my lord," said he, " in the late instance I have been just to your command—my senses have been the only evidences I have trusted. I have heard those sounds which I can not doubt." The marquis appeared shocked. Ferdinand perceived the change, and urged the subject so vigorously, that the marquis, suddenly assuming a look of grave importance, commanded him to attend him in the evening in his closet.

Ferdinand, in passing from the marquis, met Hippolitus. He was pacing the gallery in much seeming agitation; but observing Ferdinand, he advanced to him. " I am ill at heart," said he, in a melancholy tone, " assist me with your advice. We will step into this apartment, where we can converse without interruption.

" You are not ignorant," said he, throwing himself into a chair, " of the tender sentiments which your sister Julia has inspired. I entreat you, by that

that sacred friendship which has so long united us, to afford me an opportunity of pleading my passion. Her heart, which is so susceptible of other impressions, is, I fear, insensible to love. Procure me, however, the satisfaction of certainty upon a point where the tortures of suspense are surely the most intolerable."

"Your penetration," replied Ferdinand, "has for once forsaken you, else you would now be spared the tortures of which you complain; for you would have discovered what I have long observed, that Julia regards you with a partial eye."

"Do not," said Hippolitus, "make disappointment more terrible by flattery; neither suffer the partiality of friendship to mislead your judgment. Your perceptions are affected by the warmth of your feelings, and because you think I deserve her distinction, you believe I possess it. Alas! you deceive yourself, but not me!"

"The

"The very reverse," replied Ferdinand; "'tis you who deceive yourself, or rather, it is the delicacy of the passion which animates you, and which will ever operate against your clear perception of a truth in which your happiness is so deeply involved. Believe me, I speak not without reason:—she loves you."

At these words, Hippolitus started from his seat, and clasping his hands in fervent joy, "Enchanting sounds!" cried he, in a voice tenderly impassioned; "*could* I but believe ye! *could* I *but* believe ye—this world were paradise!"

During this exclamation, the emotions of Julia, who sat in her closet adjoining, can with difficulty be imagined. A door, which opened into it from the apartment where this conversation was held, was only half closed. Agitated with the pleasure this declaration excited, she yet trembled with apprehension.

hension lest she should be discovered. She hardly dared to breathe, much less to move across the closet to the door, which opened upon the gallery, whence she might probably have escaped unnoticed, lest the sound of her step should betray her. Compelled, therefore, to remain where she was, she sat in a state of fearful distress, which no colour of language can paint.

"Alas!" resumed Hippolitus, "I too eagerly admit the possibility of what I wish. If you mean that I should really believe you, confirm your assertion by some proof." "Readily," rejoined Ferdinand.

The heart of Julia beat quick.

"When you was so suddenly called to Naples upon the illness of the marquis Lomelli, I marked her conduct well, and in that read the sentiments of her heart. On the following morning, I observed in her countenance a restless anxiety which I had never seen before.

She

She watched the entrance of every person with an eager expectation, which was as often succeeded by evident disappointment. At dinner your departure was mentioned :—she spilt the wine she was carrying to her lips, and for the remainder of the day was spiritless and melancholy. I saw her ineffectual struggles to conceal the oppression at her heart. Since that time she has seized every opportunity of withdrawing from company. The gaiety with which she was so lately charmed—charmed her no longer; she became pensive, retired, and I have often heard her singing in some lonely spot, the most moving and tender airs. Your return produced a visible and instantaneous alteration; she has now resumed her gaiety; and the soft confusion of her countenance, whenever you approach, might alone suffice to convince you of the truth of my assertion.”

“O! talk for ever thus!” sighed Hippolitus.

politus. "These words are so sweet, so soothing to my soul, that I could listen till I forgot I had a wish beyond them. Yes!—Ferdinand, these circumstances are not to be doubted, and conviction opens upon my mind a flow of ecstasy I never knew till now. O! lead me to her, that I may speak the sentiments which swell my heart."

They arose; when Julia, who with difficulty had supported herself, now impelled by an irresistible fear of instant discovery, rose also, and moved softly towards the gallery. The sound of her step alarmed the count, who, apprehensive lest his conversation had been overheard, was anxious to be satisfied whether any person was in the closet. He rushed in, and discovered Julia! She caught at a chair to support her trembling frame; and overwhelmed with mortifying sensations, sunk into it, and hid her face in her robe. Hippolitus threw himself at her feet, and seizing her

her hand, pressed it to his lips in expressive silence. Some moments passed before the confusion of either would suffer them to speak. At length recovering his voice, "Can you, Madam, said he, forgive this intrusion, so unintentional? or will it deprive me of that esteem which I have but lately ventured to believe I possessed, and which I value more than existence itself? O! speak my pardon! Let me not believe that a single accident has destroyed my peace for ever."—"If your peace, Sir, depends upon a knowledge of my esteem," said Julia, in a tremulous voice, "that peace is already secure. If I wished even to deny the partiality I feel, it would now be useless; and since I no longer wish this, it would also be painful." Hippolitus could only weep his thanks over the hand he still held. "Be sensible, however, of the delicacy of my situation," continued she, rising, "and suffer me to withdraw." Saying this, she

she quitted the closet, leaving Hippolitus overcome with this sweet confirmation of his wishes, and Ferdinand not yet recovered from the painful surprize which the discovery of Julia had excited. He was deeply sensible of the confusion he had occasioned her, and knew that apologies would not restore the composure he had so cruelly yet unwarily disturbed.

Ferdinand awaited the hour appointed by the marquis in impatient curiosity. The solemn air which the marquis assumed when he commanded him to attend, had deeply impressed his mind. As the time drew nigh, expectation increased, and every moment seemed to linger into hours. At length he repaired to the closet, where he did not remain long before the marquis entered. The same chilling solemnity marked his manner. He locked the door of the closet, and seating himself, addressed Ferdinand as follows :

“ I am

“ I am now going to repose in you a confidence, which will severely prove the strength of your honour. But before I disclose a secret, hitherto so carefully concealed, and now reluctantly told, you must swear to preserve on this subject an eternal silence. If you doubt the steadiness of your discretion—now declare it, and save yourself from the infamy, and the fatal consequences, which may attend a breach of your oath;—if, on the contrary, you believe yourself capable of a strict integrity—now accept the terms, and receive the secret I offer.” Ferdinand was awed by this exordium—the impatience of curiosity was for a while suspended, and he hesitated whether he should receive the secret upon such terms. At length he signified his consent, and the marquis arising, drew his sword from the scabbard.—“ Here,” said he, offering it to Ferdinand, “ seal your vows—swear by this sacred pledge of honour never to repeat

peat what I shall now reveal." Ferdinand bowed upon the sword, and raising his eyes to heaven, solemnly swore. The marquis then resumed his seat, and proceeded.

" You are not to learn that, about a century ago, this castle was in the possession of Vincent, third marquis of Mazzini, my grandfather. At that time there existed an inveterate hatred between our family and that of della Campo. I shall not now revert to the origin of the animosity, or relate the particulars of the consequent feuds—suffice it to observe, that by the power of our family, the della Campos were unable to preserve their former consequence in Sicily, and they have therefore quitted it for a foreign land to live in unmolested security. To return to my subject.—My grandfather, believing his life endangered by his enemy, planted spies upon him. He employed some of the numerous banditti who
fought

sought protection in his service, and after some weeks past in waiting for an opportunity, they seized Henry della Campo, and brought him secretly to this castle. He was for some time confined in a close chamber of the southern buildings, where he expired; by what means I shall forbear to mention. The plan had been so well conducted, and the secrecy so strictly preserved, that every endeavour of his family to trace the means of his disappearance, proved ineffectual. Their conjectures, if they fell upon our family, were supported by no proof; and the della Campos are to this day ignorant of the mode of his death. A rumour had prevailed long before the death of my father, that the southern buildings of the castle were haunted. I disbelieved the fact, and treated it accordingly. One night, when every human being of the castle, except myself, was retired to rest, I had such strong and dreadful proofs of the general as-

feration, that even at this moment I can not recollect them without horror. Let me, if possible, forget them. From that moment I forsook those buildings; they have ever since been shut up; and the circumstance I have mentioned, is the true reason why I have resided so little at the castle."

Ferdinand listened to this narrative in silent horror. He remembered the temerity with which he had dared to penetrate those apartments—the light, and figure he had seen—and, above all, his situation in the stair-case of the tower. Every nerve thrilled at the recollection: and the terrors of remembrance almost equalled those of reality.

The marquis permitted his daughters to change their apartments, but he commanded Ferdinand to tell them, that in granting their request, he consulted their ease only, and was himself by no means convinced of its propriety. They were accordingly re-instated in their former

former chambers, and the great room only of Madame's apartments was reserved for the marchioness, who expressed her discontent to the marquis in terms of mingled censure and lamentation. The marquis privately reproved his daughters, for what he termed the idle fancies of a weak mind; and desired them no more to disturb the peace of the castle with the subject of their late fears. They received this reproof with silent submission—too much pleased with the success of their suit to be susceptible of any emotion but joy.

Ferdinand, reflecting on the late discovery, was shocked to learn, what was now forced upon his belief, that he was the descendant of a murderer. He now knew that innocent blood had been shed in the castle, and that the walls were still the haunt of an unquiet spirit, which seemed to call aloud for retribution on the posterity of him who had disturbed its eternal rest. Hippolitus

perceived his dejection, and entreated that he might participate his uneasiness; but Ferdinand, who had hitherto been frank and ingenuous, was now inflexibly reserved. "Forbear," said he, "to urge a discovery of what I am not permitted to reveal: this is the only point upon which I conjure you to be silent, and this, even to you, I can not explain." Hippolitus was surprized, but pressed the subject no farther.

Julia, though she had been extremely mortified by the circumstances attendant on the discovery of her sentiments to Hippolitus, experienced, after the first shock had subsided, an emotion more pleasing than painful. The late conversation had painted in strong colours the attachment of her lover. His diffidence—his slowness to perceive the effect of his merit—his succeeding rapture, when conviction was at length forced upon his mind; and his conduct upon discovering Julia, proved to her

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at once the delicacy and the strength of his passion, and she yielded her heart to sensations of pure and unmixed delight. She was roused from this state of visionary happiness, by a summons from the marquis to attend him in the library. A circumstance so unusual surprized her, and she obeyed with trembling curiosity. She found him pacing the room in deep thought, and she had shut the door before he perceived her. The authoritative severity in his countenance alarmed her, and prepared her for a subject of importance. He seated himself by her, and continued a moment silent. At length, steadily observing her, "I sent for you, my child," said he, "to declare the honour which awaits you. The duke de Luovo has solicited your hand. An alliance so splendid was beyond my expectation. You will receive the distinction with the gratitude it claims, and prepare for the celebration of the nuptials."

This speech fell like the dart of death upon the heart of Julia. She sat motionless—stupified and deprived of the power of utterance. The marquis observed her consternation; and mistaking its cause, “I acknowledge,” said he, “that there is somewhat abrupt in this affair; but the joy occasioned by a distinction so unmerited on your part, ought to overcome the little feminine weakness you might otherwise indulge. Retire and compose yourself; and observe,” continued he, in a stern voice, “this is no time for finesse.” These words roused Julia from her state of horrid stupefaction. “O! Sir,” said she, throwing herself at his feet, “forbear to enforce authority upon a point where to obey you would be worse than death; if, indeed, to obey you were possible.—“Cease,” said the marquis, “this affectation, and practise what becomes you.” “Pardon me, my lord,” she replied, “my distress is, alas! unfeigned.

feigned. "I cannot love the duke."

"Away!" interrupted the marquis, "nor tempt my rage with objections thus childish and absurd." "Yet hear me, my lord," said Julia, tears swelling in her eyes, "and pity the sufferings of a child, who never till this moment has dared to dispute your commands."

"Nor shall she now," said the marquis. "What—when wealth, honour, and distinction, are laid at my feet, shall they be refused, because a foolish girl—a very baby, who knows not good from evil, cries, and says she cannot love! Let me not think of it—My just anger may, perhaps, out-run discretion, and tempt me to chastise your folly.—Attend to what I say—accept the duke, or quit this castle for ever, and wander where you will." Saying this, he burst away, and Julia, who had hung weeping upon his knees, fell prostrate upon the floor. The violence of the fall completed the effect of her distress, and

she fainted. In this state she remained a considerable time. When she recovered her senses, the recollection of her calamity burst upon her mind with a force that almost again overwhelmed her. She at length raised herself from the ground, and moved towards her own apartment, but had scarcely reached the great gallery, when Hippolitus entered it. Her trembling limbs would no longer support her; she caught at a bannister to save herself; and Hippolitus, with all his speed, was scarcely in time to prevent her falling. The pale distress exhibited in her countenance terrified him, and he anxiously enquired concerning it. She could answer him only with her tears, which she found it impossible to suppress; and gently disengaging herself, tottered to her closet. Hippolitus followed her to the door, but desisted from further importunity. He pressed her hand to his lips in tender silence, and withdrew surprized and alarmed.

Julia,

Julia, resigning herself to despair, indulged in solitude the excess of her grief. A calamity, so dreadful as the present, had never before presented itself to her imagination. The union proposed would have been hateful to her, even if she had no prior attachment; what then must have been her distress, when she had given her heart to him who deserved all her admiration, and returned all her affection.

The duke de Luovo was of a character very similar to that of the marquis. The love of power was his ruling passion;—with him no gentle or generous sentiment meliorated the harshness of authority, or directed it to acts of beneficence. He delighted in simple, undisguised tyranny. He had been twice married, and the unfortunate women subjected to his power, had fallen victims to the slow but corroding hand of sorrow. He had one son, who some years before had escaped the tyranny of

his father, and had not been since heard of. At the late festival the duke had seen Julia; and her beauty made so strong an impression upon him, that he had been induced now to solicit her hand. The marquis, delighted with the prospect of a connection so flattering to his favourite passion, readily granted his consent, and immediately sealed it with a promise.

Julia remained for the rest of the day shut up in her closet, where the tender efforts of Madame and Emilia were exerted to soften her distress. Towards the close of evening, Ferdinand entered: Hippolitus, shocked at her absence, had requested him to visit her, to alleviate her affliction, and, if possible, to discover its cause. Ferdinand, who tenderly loved his sister, was alarmed by the words of Hippolitus, and immediately sought her. Her eyes were swelled with weeping, and her countenance was but too expressive of the state of her mind. Ferdinand's distress,

truss, when told of his father's conduct, was scarcely less than her own. He had pleased himself with the hope of uniting the sister of his heart with the friend whom he loved. An act of cruel authority now dissolved the fairy dream of happiness which his fancy had formed, and destroyed the peace of those most dear to him. He sat for a long time silent and dejected; at length, starting from his melancholy reverie, he bade Julia good night, and returned to Hippolitus, who was waiting for him with anxious impatience in the north hall.

Ferdinand dreaded the effect of that despair, which the intelligence he had to communicate would produce in the mind of Hippolitus. He revolved some means of softening the dreadful truth; but Hippolitus, quick to apprehend the evil which love taught him to fear, seized at once upon the reality. "Tell me all," said he, in a tone of assumed

firmness. " I am prepared for the worst." Ferdinand related the decree of the marquis, and Hippolitus soon sunk into an excess of grief, which defied, as much as it required, the powers of alleviation.

Julia, at length, retired to her chamber, but the sorrow which occupied her mind, withheld the blessings of sleep. Distracted and restless, she arose, and gently opened the window of her apartment. The night was still, and not a breath disturbed the surface of the waters. The moon shed a mild radiance over the waves, which in gentle undulations flowed upon the sands. The scene insensibly tranquillized her spirits. A tender and pleasing melancholy diffused itself over her mind; and as she mused, she heard the dashing of distant oars. Presently she perceived upon the light surface of the sea a small boat. The sound of the oars ceased, and a solemn strain of harmony (such

as

as fancy wafts from the abodes of the blessed) stole upon the silence of night. A chorus of voices now swelled upon the air, and died away at distance. In the strain Julia recollected the midnight hymn to the virgin, and holy enthusiasm filled her heart. The chorus was repeated, accompanied by a solemn striking of oars. A sigh of extacy stole from her bosom. Silence returned. The divine melody she had heard calmed the tumult of her mind, and she sunk in sweet repose.

She arose in the morning refreshed by light slumbers; but the recollection of her sorrows soon returned with new force, and sickening faintness overcame her. In this situation she received a message from the marquis to attend him instantly. She obeyed, and he bade her prepare to receive the duke, who that morning purposed to visit the castle. He commanded her to attire herself richly, and to welcome him with smiles.

finiles. Julia submitted in silence. She saw the marquis was inflexibly resolved, and she withdrew to indulge the anguish of her heart, and prepare for this detested interview.

The clock had struck twelve, when a flourish of trumpets announced the approach of the duke. The heart of Julia sunk at the sound, and she threw herself on a sofa, overwhelmed with bitter sensations. Here she was soon disturbed by a message from the marquis. She arose, and tenderly embracing Emilia, their tears for some moments flowed together. At length summoning all her fortitude, she descended to the hall, where she was met by the marquis. He led her to the saloon in which the duke sat, with whom having conversed a short time, he withdrew. The emotion of Julia, at this instant, was beyond any thing she had before suffered; but by a sudden and strange exertion of fortitude, which the force of desperate calamity some-

sometimes affords us, but which inferior sorrow toils after in vain, she recovered her composure, and resumed her natural dignity. For a moment she wondered at herself, and she formed the dangerous resolution of throwing herself upon the generosity of the duke, by acknowledging her reluctance to the engagement, and soliciting him to withdraw his suit.

The duke approached her with an air of proud condescension ; and taking her hand, placed himself beside her. Having paid some formal and general compliments to her beauty, he proceeded to profess himself her admirer. She listened for some time to his professions, and when he appeared willing to hear her, she addressed him—"I am justly sensible, my lord, of the distinction you offer me, and must lament that respectful gratitude is the only sentiment I can return. Nothing can more strongly prove my confidence in your generosity, than

than when I confess to you, that parental authority urges me to give my hand, whither my heart cannot accompany it."

She paused—the duke continued silent.—“ 'Tis you only, my lord, who can release me from a situation so distressing; and to your goodness and justice I appeal, certain that necessity will excuse the singularity of my conduct, and that I shall not appeal in vain.”

The duke was embarrassed—a flush of pride overspread his countenance, and he seemed endeavouring to stifle the feelings that swelled his heart. “I had been prepared, Madam,” said he, to expect a very different reception, and had certainly no reason to believe that the duke de Luovo was likely to sue in vain. Since, however, Madam, you acknowledge that you have already disposed of your affections, I shall certainly be very willing, if the marquis will release me from our mutual engagements, to resign you to a more favoured lover.

“ Pardon

“ Pardon me, my lord,” said Julia, blushing, “ suffer me to”——“ I am not easily deceived, Madam,” interrupted the duke,——“ your conduct can be attributed only to the influence of a prior attachment ; and though for so young a lady, such a circumstance is somewhat extraordinary, I have certainly no right to arraign your choice. Permit me to wish you a good morning.” He bowed low, and quitted the room. Julia now experienced a new distress ; she dreaded the resentment of the marquis, when he should be informed of her conversation with the duke, of whose character she now judged too justly not to repent the confidence she had reposed in him.

The duke, on quitting Julia, went to the marquis, with whom he remained in conversation some hours. When he had left the castle, the marquis sent for his daughter, and poured forth his resentment with all the violence of threats,
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and all the acrimony of contempt. So severely did he ridicule the idea of her disposing of her heart, and so dreadfully did he denounce vengeance on her disobedience, that she scarcely thought herself safe in his presence. She stood trembling and confused, and heard his reproaches without the power to reply. At length the marquis informed her, that the nuptials would be solemnized on the third day from the present; and as he quitted the room, a flood of tears came to her relief, and saved her from fainting.

Julia passed the remainder of the day in her closet with Emilia. Night returned, but brought her no peace. She sat long after the departure of Emilia; and to beguile recollection, she selected a favourite author, endeavouring to revive those sensations his page had once excited. She opened to a passage, the tender sorrow of which was applicable to her own situation, and her tears flowed
anew.

anew. Her grief was soon suspended by apprehension. Hitherto a deadly silence had reigned through the castle, interrupted only by the wind, whose low sound crept at intervals through the galleries. She now thought she heard a foot-step near her door, but presently all was still, for she believed she had been deceived by the wind. The succeeding moment, however, convinced her of her error, for she distinguished the low whispering of some persons in the gallery. Her spirits, already weakened by sorrow, deserted her; she was seized with an universal terror, and presently afterwards a low voice called her from without, and the door was opened by Ferdinand.

She shrieked and fainted. On recovering, she found herself supported by Ferdinand and Hippolitus, who had stolen this moment of silence and security to gain admittance to her presence. Hippolitus came to urge a proposal, which

which despair only could have suggested. "Fly," said he, "from the authority of a father who abuses his power, and assert the liberty of choice, which nature assigned you. Let the desperate situation of my hopes plead excuse for the apparent boldness of this address; and let the man who exists but for you, be the means of saving you from destruction. Alas! Madam, you are silent, and perhaps I have forfeited by this proposal, the confidence I so lately flattered myself I possessed. If so, I will submit to my fate in silence, and will to-morrow quit a scene which presents only images of distress to my mind.

Julia could speak but with her tears. A variety of strong and contending emotions struggled at her breast, and suppressed the power of utterance. Ferdinand seconded the proposal of the count. "It is unnecessary," my sister, said he, "to point out the misery which awaits you here. I love you too well
tame-ly

tamely to suffer you to be sacrificed to ambition, and to a passion still more hateful. I now glory in calling Hippolitus my friend—let me ere long receive him as a brother. I can give no stronger testimony of my esteem for his character, than in the wish I now express. Believe me, he has a heart worthy of your acceptance—a heart noble and expansive as your own.” “ Ah, cease,” said Julia, “ to dwell upon a character, of whose worth I am fully sensible. Your kindness and his merit can never be forgotten by her whose misfortunes you have so generously suffered to interest you.” She paused in silent hesitation. A sense of delicacy made her hesitate upon the decision which her heart so warmly prompted. If she fled with Hippolitus, she would avoid one evil, and encounter another. She would escape the dreadful destiny awaiting her, but must, perhaps, fully the purity of that reputation, which was
dearer

dearer to her than existence. In a mind like her's, exquisitely susceptible of the pride of honour, this fear was able to counteract every other consideration, and to keep her intentions in a state of painful suspense. She sighed deeply, and continued silent. Hippolitus was alarmed by the calm distress which her countenance exhibited. "O! Julia," said he, "relieve me from this dreadful suspense!—speak to me—explain this silence." She looked mournfully upon him—her lips moved, but no sounds were uttered. As he repeated his question, she waved her hand, and sunk back in her chair. She had not fainted, but continued some time in a state of stupor not less alarming. The importance of the present question, operating upon her mind, already harassed by distress, had produced a temporary suspension of reason. Hippolitus hung over her in an agony not to be described, and Ferdinand vainly repeated her name. At length,

length, uttering a deep sigh, she raised herself, and like one awakened from a dream, gazed around her. Hippolitus thanked God fervently in his heart. "Tell me but that you are well," said he, "and that I may dare to hope, and we will leave you to repose." "My sister," said Ferdinand, "consult only your own wishes, and leave the rest to me. Suffer a confidence in me to dissipate the doubts with which you are agitated." "Ferdinand," said Julia, emphatically, "how shall I express the gratitude your kindness has excited?" "Your gratitude," said he, "will be best shewn in consulting your own wishes; for, be assured, that whatever procures you happiness, will most effectually establish mine. Do not suffer the prejudices of education to render you miserable. Believe that a choice which involves the happiness or misery of your whole life, ought to be decided only by yourself."

"Let

“Let us forbear for the present,” said Hippolitus, “to urge the subject. Repose is necessary for you, addressing Julia, “and I will not suffer a selfish consideration any longer to withhold you from it.—Grant me but this request—that at this hour to-morrow night, I may return hither to receive my doom.” Julia having consented to receive Hippolitus and Ferdinand, they quitted the closet. In turning into the grand gallery, they were surprised by the appearance of a light, which gleamed upon the wall that terminated their view. It seemed to proceed from a door which opened upon a back stair-case. They pushed on, but it almost instantly disappeared, and upon the stair-case all was still. They then separated, and retired to their apartments, somewhat alarmed by this circumstance, which induced them to suspect that their visit to Julia had been observed.

Julia passed the night in broken slumbers,

numbers, and anxious consideration. On her present decision hung the crisis of her fate. Her consciousness of the influence of Hippolitus over her heart, made her fear to indulge its predilection, by trusting to her own opinion of its fidelity. She shrunk from the disgraceful idea of an elopement; yet she saw no means of avoiding this, but by rushing upon the fate so dreadful to her imagination.

On the following night, when the inhabitants of the castle were retired to rest, Hippolitus, whose expectation had lengthened the hours into ages, accompanied by Ferdinand, revisited the closet. Julia, who had known no interval of rest since they last left her, received them with much agitation. The vivid glow of health had fled her cheek, and was succeeded by a languid delicacy, less beautiful, but more interesting. To the eager enquiries of Hippolitus, she returned no answer; but faintly smil-

ing through her tears, presented him her hand, and covered her face with her robe. "I receive it," cried he, "as the pledge of my happiness;—yet—yet let your voice ratify the gift." "If the present concession does not sink me in your esteem," said Julia, in a low tone, "this hand is your's." "The concession, my love (for by that tender name I may now call you), would, if possible, raise you in my esteem; but since that has been long-incapable of addition, it can only heighten my opinion of myself, and increase my gratitude to you: gratitude which I will endeavour to shew by an anxious care of your happiness, and by the tender attentions of a whole life. From this blessed moment," continued he, in a voice of rapture, "permit me, in thought, to hail you as my wife. From this moment let me banish every vestige of sorrow;—let me dry those tears," gently pressing her cheek with his lips, "never
to

to spring again."—The gratitude and joy which Ferdinand expressed upon this occasion, united with the tenderness of Hippolitus to soothe the agitated spirits of Julia, and she gradually recovered her complacency.

They now arranged their plan of escape; in the execution of which, no time was to be lost, since the nuptials with the duke were to be solemnized on the day after the morrow. Their scheme, whatever it was that should be adopted, they, therefore, resolved to execute on the following night. But when they descended from the first warmth of enterprise, to minuter examination, they soon found the difficulties of the undertaking. The keys of the castle were kept by Robert, the confidential servant of the marquis, who every night deposited them in an iron chest in his chamber. To obtain them by stratagem seemed impossible, and Ferdinand feared to tamper with

the honesty of this man, who had been many years in the service of the marquis. Dangerous as was the attempt, no other alternative appeared, and they were therefore compelled to rest all their hopes upon the experiment. It was settled, that if the keys could be procured, Ferdinand and Hippolitus should meet Julia in the closet; that they should convey her to the sea shore, from whence a boat, which was to be kept in waiting, would carry them to the opposite coast of Calabria, where the marriage might be solemnized without danger of interruption. But, as it was necessary that Ferdinand should not appear in the affair, it was agreed that he should return to the castle immediately upon the embarkation of his sister. Having thus arranged their plan of operation, they separated till the following night, which was to decide the fate of Hippolitus and Julia.

Julia, whose mind was soothed by
the

the fraternal kindness of Ferdinand, and the tender assurances of Hippolitus, now experienced an interval of repose. At the return of day she awoke refreshed, and tolerably composed. She selected the few clothes which were necessary, and prepared them for her journey. A sentiment of generosity justified her in the reserve she preserved in Emilia and Madame de Menon, whose faithfulness and attachment she could not doubt, but whom she disdained to involve in the disgrace that must fall upon them, should their knowledge of her flight be discovered.

In the mean time the castle was a scene of confusion. The magnificent preparations which were making for the nuptials engaged all eyes, and busied all hands. The marchioness had the direction of the whole; and the alacrity with which she acquitted herself, testified how much she was pleased with the alliance, and created a suspicion,

that it had not been concerted without some exertion of her influence. Thus was Julia designed the joint victim of ambition and illicit love.

The composure of Julia declined with the day, whose hours had crept heavily along. As the night drew on, her anxiety for the success of Ferdinand's negotiation with Robert increased to a painful degree. A variety of new emotions pressed at her heart, and subdued her spirits. When she bade Emilia good night, she thought she beheld her for the last time. The ideas of the distance which would separate them, of the dangers she was going to encounter, with a train of wild and fearful anticipations, crowded upon her mind, tears sprang in her eyes, and it was with difficulty she avoided betraying her emotions. Of Madame, too, her heart took a tender farewell. At length she heard the marquis retire to his apartment, and the doors belonging
to

to the several chambers of the guests successively close. She marked with trembling attention the gradual change from bustle to quiet, till all was still.

She now held herself in readiness to depart at the moment in which Ferdinand and Hippolitus, for whose steps in the gallery she eagerly listened, should appear. The castle clock struck twelve. The sound seemed to shake the pile. Julia felt it thrill upon her heart. "I hear you," sighed she, "for the last time." The stillness of death succeeded. She continued to listen; but no sound met her ear. For a considerable time she sat in a state of anxious expectation not to be described. The clock chimed the successive quarters; and her fear rose to each additional sound. At length she heard it strike one. Hollow was that sound, and dreadful to her hopes; for neither Hippolitus nor Ferdinand appeared. She grew faint with fear and disappointment. Her mind, which for

two hours had been kept upon the stretch of expectation, now resigned itself to despair. She gently opened the door of her closet, and looked upon the gallery; but all was lonely and silent. It appeared that Robert had refused to be accessory to their scheme; and it was probable that he had betrayed it to the marquis. Overwhelmed with bitter reflections, she threw herself upon the sofa in the first distraction of despair. Suddenly she thought she heard a noise in the gallery; and as she started from her posture to listen to the sound, the door of her closet was gently opened by Ferdinand. "Come, my love," said he, "the keys are ours, and we have not a moment to lose; our delay has been unavoidable; but this is no time for explanation." Julia, almost fainting, gave her hand to Ferdinand; and Hippolitus, after some short expression of his thankfulness, followed. They passed the door of Madame's chamber;

chamber ; and treading the gallery with slow and silent steps, descended to the hall. This they crossed towards a door, after opening which, they were to find their way, through various passages, to a remote part of the castle, where a private door opened upon the walls. Ferdinand carried the several keys. They fastened the hall door after them, and proceeded through a narrow passage terminating in a stair-case.

They descended, and had hardly reached the bottom, when they heard a loud noise at the door above, and presently the voices of several people. Julia scarcely felt the ground she trod on, and Ferdinand flew to unlock a door that obstructed their way. He applied the different keys, and at length found the proper one ; but the lock was rusty, and refused to yield. Their distress was not now to be conceived. The noise above increased ; and it seemed as if the people were forcing

the door. Hippolitus and Ferdinand vainly tried to turn the key. A sudden crash from above convinced them that the door had yielded, when making another desperate effort, the key broke in the lock. Trembling and exhausted, Julia gave herself up for lost. As she hung upon Ferdinand, Hippolitus vainly endeavoured to soothe her—the noise suddenly ceased. They listened, dreading to hear the sounds renewed; but, to their utter astonishment, the silence of the place remained undisturbed. They had now time to breathe, and to consider the possibility of effecting their escape; for from the marquis they had no mercy to hope. Hippolitus, in order to ascertain whether the people had quitted the door above, began to ascend the passage, in which he had not gone many steps when the noise was renewed with increased violence. He instantly retreated; and making a desperate push at the door below, which obstructed

obstructed their passage, it seemed to yield,
 and by another effort of Ferdinand, burst
 open. They had not an instant to lose;
 for they now heard the steps of persons
 descending the stairs. The avenue they
 were in opened into a kind of chamber,
 whence three passages branched, of
 which they immediately chose the first.
 Another door now obstructed their pas-
 sage; and they were compelled to wait
 while Ferdinand applied the keys. "Be
 quick," said Julia, "or we are lost. O!
 if this lock too is rusted!"—"Hark!"
 said Ferdinand. They now discovered
 what apprehension had before prevented
 them from perceiving, that the sounds
 of pursuit were ceased, and all again
 was silent. As this could happen only
 by the mistake of their pursuers, in
 taking the wrong *route*, they resolved
 to preserve their advantage, by con-
 cealing the light, which Ferdinand
 now covered with his cloak. The door
 was opened, and they passed on; but

they were perplexed in the intricacies of the place, and wandered about in vain endeavour to find their way. Often did they pause to listen, and often did fancy give them sounds of fearful import. At length they entered on the passage, which Ferdinand knew led directly to a door that opened on the woods. Rejoiced at this certainty, they soon reached the spot which was to give them liberty.

Ferdinand turned the key; the door unclosed, and, to their infinite joy, discovered to them the grey dawn. "Now, my love," said Hippolitus, "you are safe, and I am happy."—Immediately a loud voice from without exclaimed, "Take, villain, the reward of your perfidy!" At the same instant Hippolitus received a sword in his body, and uttering a deep sigh, fell to the ground. Julia shrieked and fainted; Ferdinand drawing his sword, advanced towards the assassin, upon whose counte-

countenance the light of his lamp then shone, and discovered to him his father! The sword fell from his grasp, and he started back in an agony of horror. He was instantly surrounded, and seized by the servants of the marquis, while the marquis himself denounced vengeance upon his head, and ordered him to be thrown into the dungeon of the castle. At this instant the servants of the count, who were awaiting his arrival on the sea shore, hearing the tumult, hastened to the scene, and there beheld their beloved master lifeless and weltering in his blood. They conveyed the bleeding body, with loud lamentations, on board the vessel which had been prepared for him, and immediately set sail for Italy.

Julia, on recovering her senses, found herself in a small room, of which she had no remembrance, with her maid weeping over her. Recollection, when it returned, brought to her mind an energy of grief, which exceeded even
all

all former conceptions of sufferings. Yet her misery was heightened, by the intelligence which she now received. She learned that Hippolitus had been borne away lifeless by his people; that Ferdinand was confined in a dungeon by order of the marquis; and that herself was a prisoner in a remote room, from which, on the day after the morrow, she was to be removed to the chapel of the castle, and there sacrificed to the ambition of her father, and the absurd love of the duke de Luovo.

This accumulation of evil subdued each power of resistance, and reduced Julia to a state little short of distraction. No person was allowed to approach her but her maid, and the servant who brought her food. Emilia, who, though shocked by Julia's apparent want of confidence, severely sympathized in her distress, solicited to see her; but the pain of denial was so sharply aggravated by rebuke, that she dared not again to urge the request.

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In the mean time, Ferdinand, involved in the gloom of a dungeon, was resigned to the painful recollection of the past, and a horrid anticipation of the future. From the resentment of the marquis, whose passions were wild and terrible, and whose rank gave him an unlimited power of life and death in his own territories, Ferdinand had much to fear. Yet selfish apprehension soon yielded to a more noble sorrow. He mourned the fate of Hippolitus, and the sufferings of Julia. He could attribute the failure of their scheme only to the treachery of Robert, who had, however, met the wishes of Ferdinand, with strong apparent sincerity, and generous interest in the cause of Julia. On the night of the intended elopement, he had consigned the keys to Ferdinand, who, immediately on receiving them, went to the apartment of Hippolitus. There they were detained till after the clock had struck one, by a low noise,

noise, which returned at intervals, and convinced them, that some part of the family was not yet retired to rest. This noise was undoubtedly occasioned by the people whom the marquis had employed to watch, and whose vigilance was too faithful to suffer the fugitives to escape. The very caution of Ferdinand defeated its purpose; for it is probable, that had he attempted to quit the castle by the common entrance, he might have escaped. The keys of the grand door, and those of the courts, remaining in the possession of Robert, the marquis was certain of the intended place of their departure; and was thus enabled to defeat their hopes at the very moment when they exulted in their success.

When the marchioness learned the fate of Hippolitus, the resentment of jealous passion yielded to emotions of pity. Revenge was satisfied; and she could now lament the sufferings of a youth,

youth, whose personal charms had touched her heart as much as his virtues had disappointed her hopes. Still true to passion, and inaccessible to reason, she poured upon the defenceless Julia her anger for that calamity of which she herself was the unwilling cause. By a dextrous adaptation of her powers, she had worked upon the passions of the marquis, so as to render him relentless in the pursuit of ambitious purposes, and insatiable in revenging his disappointment. But the effects of her artifices exceeded her intention in exerting them ; and, when she meant only to sacrifice a rival to her love, she found she had given up its object to revenge.

CHAPTER IV.

THE nuptial morn, so justly dreaded by Julia, and so impatiently awaited by the marquis, now arrived. The marriage was to be celebrated with a magnificence, which demonstrated the joy it occasioned to the marquis. The castle was fitted up in a style of grandeur superior to any thing that had been before seen in it. The neighbouring nobility were invited to an entertainment, which was to conclude with a splendid ball and supper, and the gates were to be thrown open to all who chose to partake of the bounty of the marquis. At an early hour, the duke, attended by a numerous retinue, entered the castle. Ferdinand heard from his dungeon, where the rigour and the policy of the marquis still confined him, the loud clattering of hoofs in the court yard above, the rolling of the carriage

carriage wheels, and all the tumultuous bustle which the entrance of the duke occasioned. He too well understood the cause of this uproar, and it awakened in him sensations resembling those which the condemned criminal feels, when his ears are assailed by the dreadful sounds that precede his execution. When he was able to think of himself, he wondered by what means the marquis would reconcile his absence to the guests. He, however, knew too well the dissipated character of the Sicilian nobility, to doubt, that whatever story should be invented would be very readily believed by them; who, even if they knew the truth, would not suffer a discovery of their knowledge to interrupt the festivity which was offered them.

The marquis and marchioness received the duke in the outer hall, and conducted him to the saloon, where he partook of the refreshments prepared for him, and from thence retired to the chapel.

pel. The marquis now withdrew to lead Julia to the altar, and Emilia was ordered to attend at the door of the chapel, in which the priest and a numerous company were already assembled. The marchioness, a prey to the turbulence of succeeding passions, exulted in the near completion of her favourite scheme. A disappointment, however, was prepared for her, which would at once crush the triumph of her malice and her pride. The marquis, on entering the prison of Julia, found it empty ! His astonishment and indignation, upon the discovery, almost overpowered his reason. Of the servants of the castle, who were immediately summoned, he enquired concerning her escape, with a mixture of fury and sorrow, which left them no opportunity for reply. They had, however, no information to give, but that her woman had not appeared during the whole morning. In the prison were found the bridal habiliments, which the marchioness herself had

had sent on the preceding night, together with a letter addressed to Emilia, which contained the following words :

“ Adieu, dear Emilia ; never more will you see your wretched sister, who flies from the cruel fate now prepared for her, certain that she can never meet one more dreadful.—In happiness or misery—in hope or despair—whatever may be your situation—still remember me with pity and affection. Dear Emilia, adieu!—You will always be the sister of my heart—may you never be the partner of my misfortunes !”

While the marquis was reading this letter, the marchioness, who supposed the delay occasioned by some opposition from Julia, flew to the apartment. By her orders, all the habitable parts of the castle were explored, and she herself assisted in the search. At length the intelligence was communicated to the chapel, and the confusion became universal. The priest quitted the altar, and the company returned to the saloon.

The

The letter, when it was given to Emilia, excited emotions which she found it impossible to disguise, but which did not, however, protect her from a suspicion that she was concerned in the transaction, her knowledge of which this letter appeared intended to conceal.

The marquis immediately dispatched servants upon the fleetest horses of his stables, with directions to take different routes, and to scour every corner of the island in pursuit of the fugitives. When these exertions had somewhat quieted his mind, he began to consider by what means Julia could have effected her escape. She had been confined in a small room in a remote part of the castle, to which no person had been admitted but her own woman, and Robert, the confidential servant of the marquis. Even Lisette had not been suffered to enter, unless accompanied by Robert, in whose room, since the night of the fatal discovery, the keys had been regularly deposited. Without them it was impossible

fible, she could have escaped: the windows of the apartment being barred and grated, and opening into an inner court, at a prodigious height from the ground. Besides, whom could she depend upon for protection—or whether could she intend to fly for concealment?—The associates of her former elopement were utterly unable to assist her even with advice. Ferdinand, himself a prisoner, had been deprived of any means of intercourse with her, and Hippolitus had been carried lifeless on board a vessel, which had immediately sailed for Italy.

Robert, to whom the keys had been intrusted, was severely interrogated by the marquis. He persisted in a simple and uniform declaration of his innocence; but as the marquis believed it impossible that Julia could have escaped without his knowledge, he was ordered into imprisonment till he should confess the fact.

The

The pride of the duke was severely wounded by this elopement, which proved the excess of Julia's aversion, and completed the disgraceful circumstances of his rejection. The marquis had carefully concealed from him her prior attempt at elopement, and her consequent confinement; but the truth now burst from disguise, and stood revealed with bitter aggravation. The duke, fired with indignation at the duplicity of the marquis, poured forth his resentment in terms of proud and bitter invective; and the marquis, galled by recent disappointment, was in no mood to restrain the impetuosity of his nature. He retorted with acrimony; and the consequence would have been serious, had not the friends of each party interposed for their preservation. The disputants were at length reconciled: it was agreed to pursue Julia with united, and indefatigable search; and that whenever she should be found, the nuptials should be solemn-

solemnized without further delay. With the character of the duke, this conduct was consistent. His passions, inflamed by disappointment, and strengthened by repulse, now defied the power of obstacle; and those considerations which would have operated with a more delicate mind to overcome its original inclination, served only to encrease the violence of his.

Madame de Menon, who loved Julia with maternal affection, was an interested observer of all that passed at the castle. The cruel fate to which the marquis destined his daughter, she had severely lamented, yet she could hardly rejoice to find that this had been avoided by elopement. She trembled for the future safety of her pupil; and her tranquillity, which was thus first disturbed for the welfare of others, she was not soon suffered to recover.

The marchioness had long nourished a secret dislike to Madame de Menon,

whose virtues were a silent reproof to her vices. The contrariety of their dispositions, created in the marchioness an aversion, which would have amounted to contempt, had not that dignity of virtue, which strongly characterized the manners of Madame, compelled the former to fear what she wished to despise. Her conscience whispered her, that the dislike was mutual; and she now rejoiced in the opportunity which seemed to offer itself, of lowering the proud integrity of Madame's character. Pretending, therefore, to believe that she had encouraged Ferdinand to disobey his father's commands, and had been accessory to the elopement, she accused her of these offences, and stimulated the marquis to reprehend her conduct. But the integrity of Madame de Menon was not to be questioned with impunity. Without deigning to answer the imputation, she desired to resign an office of which she was no longer considered worthy,

thy, and to quit the castle immediately. This the policy of the marquis would not suffer; and he was compelled to make such ample concessions to Madame, as induced her for the present to continue at the castle.

The news of Julia's elopement at length reached the ears of Ferdinand, whose joy at this event was equalled only by his surprize. He lost, for a moment, the sense of his own situation, and thought only of the escape of Julia. But his sorrow soon returned with accumulated force, when he recollected that Julia might then perhaps want that assistance, which his confinement alone could prevent his affording her.

The servants, who had been sent in pursuit, returned to the castle without any satisfactory information. Week after week elapsed in fruitless search, yet the duke was strenuous in continuing the pursuit. Emissaries were dispatched to Naples, and to the several

estates of the count Vereza, but they returned without any satisfactory information. The count had not been heard of since he quitted Naples for Sicily.

During these enquiries a new subject of disturbance broke out in the castle of Mazzini. On the night so fatal to the hopes of Hippolitus and Julia, when the tumult was subsided, and all was still, a light was observed by a servant, as he passed by the window of the great stair-case, in the way to his chamber, to glimmer through the casement before noticed in the southern buildings. While he stood observing it, it vanished, and presently re-appeared—The former mysterious circumstances relative to these buildings rushed upon his mind; and fired with wonder, he roused some of his fellow servants to come and behold this phenomenon.

As they gazed in silent terror, the light disappeared, and soon after, they saw a small door belonging to the south tower

tower open, and a figure bearing a light
 issue forth, which, gliding along the cas-
 tle walls, was quickly lost to their view.
 Overcome with fear, they hurried back
 to their chambers, and revolved all the
 late wonderful occurrences. They doubt-
 ed not, that this was the figure formerly
 seen by the lady Julia. The sudden
 change of Madame de Menon's apart-
 ments had not passed unobserved by the
 servants, but they now no longer hesitat-
 ed to what to attribute the removal.
 They collected each various and uncom-
 mon circumstance attendant on this part
 of the fabric; and, comparing them with
 the present, their superstitious fears were
 confirmed, and their terror heightened
 to such a degree, that many of them re-
 solved to quit the service of the mar-
 quis.

The marquis, surprized at this sudden
 desertion, enquired into its cause, and
 learned the truth. Shocked by this dis-
 covery, he yet resolved to prevent, if

possible, the ill effects which might be expected from a circulation of the report. To this end it was necessary to quiet the minds of his people, and to prevent their quitting his service. Having severely reprehended them for the idle apprehension they encouraged, he told them that, to prove the fallacy of their surmises, he would lead them over that part of the castle which was the subject of their fears, and ordered them to attend him at the return of night in the north hall. Emilia and Madame de Menon, surprized at this procedure, awaited the issue in silent expectation.

The servants, in obedience to the commands of the marquis, assembled at night in the north hall. The air of desolation which reigned through the south buildings, and the circumstance of their having been for so many years shut up, would naturally tend to inspire awe; but to these people, who firmly believed them to be the haunt of an
unquiet

unquiet spirit, terror was the predominant sentiment.

The marquis now appeared with the keys of these buildings in his hands, and every heart thrilled with wild expectation. He ordered Robert to precede him with a torch, and the rest of the servants following, he passed on. A pair of iron gates were unlocked, and they proceeded through a court, whose pavement was wildly overgrown with long grass, to the great door of the south fabric. Here they met with some difficulty, for the lock, which had not been turned for many years, was rusted.

During this interval, the silence of expectation sealed the lips of all present. At length the lock yielded. That door, which had not been passed for so many years, creaked heavily upon its hinges, and disclosed the hall of black marble, which Ferdinand had formerly crossed. "Now," cried the marquis, in a tone of irony, as he entered, "expect to en-

counter the ghosts of which you tell me : but if you fail to conquer them, prepare to quit my service. The people who live with me, shall at least have courage and ability sufficient to defend me from these spiritual attacks. All I apprehend is, that the enemy will not appear, and in this case your valour will go untried."

No one dared to answer, but all followed, in silent fear, the marquis, who ascended the great stair-case, and entered the gallery. "Unlock that door," said he, pointing to one on the left, "and we will soon unhouse these ghosts." Robert applied the key, but his hand shook so violently that he could not turn it. "Here is a fellow," cried the marquis, "fit to encounter a whole legion of spirits. Do you, Anthony, take the key, and try your valour."

"Please you, my lord," replied Anthony, "I never was a good one at unlock-

unlocking a door in my life; but here is Gregory will do it." "No, my lord, an' please you," said Gregory, here is Richard." "Stand off," said the marquis, "I will shame your cowardice, and do it myself."

Saying this, he turned the key, and was rushing on, but the door refused to yield; it shook under his hands, and seemed as if partially held by some person on the other side. The marquis was surprized, and made several efforts to move it, without effect. He then ordered his servants to burst it open; but, shrinking back with one accord, they cried, "for God's sake, my lord, go no farther; we are satisfied here are no ghosts; only let us get back."

"It is now then my turn to be satisfied," replied the marquis, "and till I am, not one of you shall stir. Open me that door." "My lord!"—"Nay," said the marquis, assuming a look of stern authority—"dispute not my commands. I am not to be trifled with."

They now stepped forward, and applied their strength to the door, when a loud and sudden noise burst from within, and resounded through the hollow chambers! The men started back in affright, and were rushing headlong down the stair-case, when the voice of the marquis arrested their flight. They returned, with hearts palpitating with terror. "Observe what I say," said the marquis, "and behave like men. Yonder door," pointing to one at some distance, "will lead us through other rooms to this chamber—unlock it therefore, for I will know the cause of these sounds." Shocked at this determination, the servants again supplicated the marquis to go no farther; and to be obeyed, he was obliged to exert all his authority. The door was opened, and discovered a long, narrow passage, into which they descended by a few steps. It led to a gallery, that terminated in a back stair-

case,

case, where several doors appeared, one of which the marquis unclosed. A spacious chamber appeared beyond, whose walls, decayed and discoloured by the damp, exhibited a melancholy proof of desertion.

They passed on through a long suite of lofty and noble apartments, which were in the same ruinous condition. At length they came to the chamber whence the noise had issued. "Go first, Robert, with the light," said the marquis, as they approached the door; "this is the key." Robert trembled—but obeyed, and the other servants followed in silence. They stopped a moment at the door to listen, but all was still within. The door was opened, and disclosed a large vaulted chamber, nearly resembling those they had passed, and on looking round, they discovered at once the cause of the alarm.—A part of the decayed roof was fallen in, and the stones and rubbish of the ruin fall-

ing against the gallery door, obstructed the passage. It was evident, too, whence the noise which occasioned their terror had arisen; the loose stones, which were piled against the door, being shook by the effort made to open it, had given way, and rolled to the floor.

After surveying the place, they returned to the back stairs, which they descended; and having pursued the several windings of a long passage, found themselves again in the marble hall. "Now," said the marquis, "what think ye? What evil spirits infest these walls? Henceforth be cautious how ye credit the phantasms of idleness, for ye may not always meet with a master who will condescend to undeceive ye." They acknowledged the goodness of the marquis, and professing themselves perfectly conscious of the error of their former suspicions, desired they might search no farther. "I chuse to leave nothing to your imagination," replied the

the marquis, "left hereafter it should betray you into a similar error. Follow me, therefore; you shall see the whole of these buildings." Saying this, he led them to the south tower. They remembered, that from a door of this tower, the figure which caused their alarm had issued; and, notwithstanding the late assertion of their suspicions being removed, fear still operated powerfully upon their minds, and they would willingly have been excused from farther research. "Would any of you chuse to explore this tower?" said the marquis, pointing to the broken staircase; "for myself, I am mortal, and therefore fear to venture; but you, who hold communion with disembodied spirits, may partake something of their nature; if so, you may pass without apprehension where the ghost has probably passed before." They shrunk at this reproof, and were silent.

The marquis, turning to a door on his

his right hand, ordered it to be unlocked. It opened upon the country, and the servants knew it to be the same whence the figure had appeared. Having re-locked it, "Lift that trap-door; we will descend into the vaults," said the marquis. "What trap-door, my Lord?" said Robert, with encreased agitation; "I see none." The marquis pointed, and Robert perceived a door, which lay almost concealed beneath the stones that had fallen from the staircase above. He began to remove them, when the marquis suddenly turning—"I have already sufficiently indulged your folly," said he, "and am weary of this business. If you are capable of receiving conviction from truth, you must now be convinced that these buildings are not the haunt of a supernatural being; and if you are incapable, it would be entirely useless to proceed. You, Robert, may therefore spare yourself the trouble of removing the rubbish; we will quit this part of the fabric."

The

The servants joyfully obeyed, and the marquis locking the several doors, returned with the keys to the habitable part of the castle.

Every enquiry after Julia had hitherto proved fruitless; and the imperious nature of the marquis, heightened by the present vexation, became intolerably oppressive to all around him. As the hope of recovering Julia declined, his opinion that Emilia had assisted her to escape strengthened, and he inflicted upon her the severity of his unjust suspicions. She was ordered to confine herself to her apartment till her innocence should be cleared, or her sister discovered. From Madame de Menon she received a faithful sympathy, which was the sole relief of her oppressed heart. Her anxiety concerning Julia daily encreased, and was heightened into the most terrifying apprehensions for her safety. She knew of no person in whom her sister could confide, or of
any

any place where she could find protection ; the most deplorable evils were therefore to be expected.

One day, as she was sitting at the window of her apartment, engaged in melancholy reflection, she saw a man riding towards the castle on full speed. Her heart beat with fear and expectation ; for his haste made her suspect he brought intelligence of Julia ; and she could scarcely refrain from breaking through the command of the marquis, and rushing into the hall to learn something of his errand. She was right in her conjecture ; the person she had seen was a spy of the marquis's, and came to inform him that the lady Julia was at that time concealed in a cottage of the forest of Marentino. The marquis, rejoiced at this intelligence, gave the man a liberal reward. He learned also, that she was accompanied by a young cavalier ; which circumstance surprized him exceedingly ; for he knew of no person
except

except the count de Vereza, with whom she could have entrusted herself, and the count had fallen by his sword! He immediately ordered a party of his people to accompany the messenger to the forest of Marentino, and to suffer neither Julia nor the cavalier to escape them, on pain of death.

When the duke de Luovo was informed of this discovery, he entreated and obtained permission of the marquis to join in the pursuit. He immediately set out on the expedition, armed, and followed by a number of his servants. He resolved to encounter all hazards, and to practise the most desperate extremes, rather than fail in the object of his enterprize. In a short time, he overtook the marquis's people, and they proceeded together with all possible speed. The forest lay several leagues distant from the castle of Mazzini, and the day was closing when they entered upon the borders. The thick foliage of
the

the trees spread a deeper shade around; and they were obliged to proceed with caution. Darknefs had long fallen upon the earth when they reached the cottage, to which they were directed by a light that glimmered from afar among the trees. The duke left his people at some distance; and dismounting, and accompanied only by one servant, approached the cottage. When he reached it, he stopped, and looking through the window, observed a man and woman, in the habit of peasants, seated at their supper. They were conversing with earnestness; and the duke, hoping to obtain farther intelligence of Julia, endeavoured to listen to their discourse. They were praising the beauty of a lady, whom the duke did not doubt to be Julia, and the woman spoke much in praise of the cavalier. "He has a noble heart," said she; "and, I am sure, by his look, belongs to some great family." "Nay," replied her companion,

nion, " the lady is as good as he. I have been at Palermo, and ought to know what great folks are, and if she is not one of them, never take my word again. Poor thing, how she does take on! It made my heart ach to see her."

They were some time silent. The duke knocked at the door, and enquired of the man who opened it, concerning the lady and cavalier then in his cottage. He was assured there were no other persons in the cottage than those he then saw. The duke persisted in affirming that the persons he enquired for were there concealed; which the man being as resolute in denying, he gave the signal, and his people approached, and surrounded the cottage. The peasants, terrified by this circumstance, confessed that a lady and cavalier, such as the duke described, had been for some time concealed in the cottage; but that they were now departed.

Suf-

Suspicious of the truth of the latter assertion, the duke ordered his people to search the cottage, and that part of the forest contiguous to it. The search ended in disappointment. The duke, however, resolved to obtain all possible information concerning the fugitives; and assuming, therefore, a stern air, bade the peasant, on pain of instant death, discover all he knew of them.

The man replied, that on a very dark and stormy night, about a week before, two persons had come to the cottage, and desired shelter. That they were unattended; but seemed to be persons of consequence in disguise. That they paid very liberally for what they had; and that they departed from the cottage a few hours before the arrival of the duke.

The duke enquired concerning the course they had taken; and having received information, re-mounted his horse, and set forward in pursuit. The road

road lay for several leagues through the forest, and the darkness, and the probability of encountering banditti, made the journey dangerous. About the break of day, they quitted the forest, and entered upon a wild and mountainous country, in which they travelled some miles without perceiving a hut, or a human being. No vestige of cultivation appeared, and no sounds reached them but those of their horses feet, and the roaring of the winds through the deep forests that overhung the mountains. The pursuit was uncertain, but the duke resolved to persevere.

They came at length to a cottage, where he repeated his enquiries, and learned to his satisfaction that two persons, such as he described, had stopped there for refreshment about two hours before. He found it now necessary to stop for the same purpose. Bread and milk, the only provisions of the place, were set before him, and his attendants would

would have been well contented, had there been sufficient of this homely fare to have satisfied their hunger.

Having dispatched an hasty meal, they again set forward in the way pointed out to them as the route of the fugitives. The country assumed a more civilized aspect. Corn, vineyards, olives, and groves of mulberry-trees, adorned the hills. The valleys, luxuriant in shade, were frequently embellished by the windings of a lucid stream, and diversified by clusters of half-seen cottages. Here the rising turrets of a monastery appeared above the thick trees with which they were surrounded; and there the savage wilds, the travellers had passed, formed a bold and picturesque back-ground to the scene.

To the questions put by the duke to the several persons he met, he received answers that encouraged him to proceed. At noon he halted at a village to refresh himself and his people. He
 blrow could

could gain no intelligence of Julia, and was perplexed which way to chuse; but determined at length to pursue the road he was then in, and accordingly again set forward. He travelled several miles, without meeting any person who could give the necessary information, and began to despair of success. The lengthened shadows of the mountains, and the fading light, gave signals of declining day; when, having gained the summit of a high hill, he observed two persons travelling on horse-back in the plains below. On one of them he distinguished the habiliments of a woman; and in her air he thought he discovered that of Julia. While he stood attentively surveying them, they looked towards the hill; when, as if urged by a sudden impulse of terror, they set off on full speed over the plains. The duke had no doubt that these were the persons he sought; and he, therefore, ordered some of his people to pursue them

them, and pushed his horse into a full gallop. Before he reached the plains, the fugitives, winding round an abrupt hill, were lost to his view. The duke continued his course, and his people, who were a considerable way before him, at length reached the hill, behind which the two persons had disappeared. No traces of them were to be seen, and they entered a narrow defile between two ranges of high and savage mountains; on the right of which a rapid stream rolled along, and broke with its deep resounding murmurs the solemn silence of the place. The shades of evening now fell thick, and the scene was soon enveloped in darkness; but to the duke, who was animated by a strong and impetuous passion, these were unimportant circumstances. Although he knew that the wilds of Sicily were frequently infested with banditti, his numbers made him fearless of attack. Not so his attendants, many of whom, as the dark-

darkness. increased, testified emotions not very honourable to their courage ; starting at every bush, and believing it concealed a murderer. They endeavoured to dissuade the duke from proceeding, expressing uncertainty of their being in the right route, and recommending the open plains. But the duke, whose eye had been vigilant to mark the flight of the fugitives, and who was not to be dissuaded from his purpose, quickly repressed their arguments. They continued their course without meeting a single person.

The moon now rose, and afforded them a shadowy imperfect view of the surrounding objects. The prospect was gloomy and vast, and not a human habitation met their eyes. They had now lost every trace of the fugitives, and found themselves bewildered in a wild and savage country. Their only remaining care was to extricate themselves from so forlorn a situation, and they lis-

tened at every step with anxious attention for some sound that might discover to them the haunts of men. They listened in vain; the stillness of night was undisturbed but by the wind, which broke at intervals in low and hollow murmurs from among the mountains.

As they proceeded with silent caution, they perceived a light break from among the rocks at some distance. The duke hesitated whether to approach, since it might probably proceed from a party of the banditti with which these mountains were said to be infested. While he hesitated, it disappeared; but he had not advanced many steps when it returned. He now perceived it to issue from the mouth of a cavern, and cast a bright reflection upon the overhanging rocks and shrubs.

He dismounted, and followed by two of his people, leaving the rest at some distance, moved with slow and silent steps towards the cave. As he drew near,

near, he heard the sound of many voices in high carousal. Suddenly the uproar ceased, and the following words were sung by a clear and manly voice :

S O N G.

Pour the rich libation high ;

The sparkling cup to Bacchus fill ;

His joys shall dance in ev'ry eye,

And chase the forms of future ill !

Quick the magic raptures steal

O'er the fancy-kindling brain,

Warm the heart with social zeal,

And song and laughter reign.

Then visions of pleasure shall float on our sight,

While light bounding our spirits shall flow ;

And the god shall impart a fine sense of delight,

Which in vain *sober* mortals would know.

The last verse was repeated in loud chorus. The duke listened with astonishment ! Such social merriment amid a scene of such savage wildness, appeared more like enchantment than reality. He would not have hesitated to pronounce this a party of banditti, had not the

delicacy of expression preserved in the song, appeared unattainable by men of their class.

He had now a full view of the cave; and the moment which convinced him of his error, served also to increase his surprize. He beheld, by the light of a fire, a party of banditti seated within the deepest recess of the cave round a rude kind of table formed in the rock. The table was spread with provisions, and they were regaling themselves with great eagerness and joy. The countenances of the men exhibited a strange mixture of fierceness and sociality; and the duke could almost have imagined he beheld in these robbers a band of the early Romans, before knowledge had civilized, or luxury had softened them. But he had not much time for meditation; a sense of his danger bade him fly while to fly was yet in his power. As he turned to depart, he observed two saddle horses grazing upon the herb-

age

age near the mouth of the cave. It instantly occurred to him that they belonged to Julia and her companion. He hesitated, and at length determined to linger awhile, and listen to the conversation of the robbers, hoping from thence to have his doubts resolved. They talked for some time in a strain of high conviviality, and recounted in exultation many of their exploits. They described also the behaviour of several people whom they had robbed, with highly ludicrous allusions, and with much rude humour, while the cave re-echoed with loud bursts of laughter and applause. They were thus engaged in tumultuous merriment, till one of them, cursing the scanty plunder of their late adventure, but praising the beauty of a lady, they all lowered their voices together, and seemed as if debating upon a point uncommonly interesting to them. The passions of the duke were roused, and he became certain that it

was Julia, of whom they had spoken. In the first impulse of feeling he drew his sword ; but recollecting the number of his adversaries, restrained his fury. He was turning from the cave with a design of summoning his people, when the light of the fire glittering upon the bright blade of his weapon, caught the eye of one of the banditti. He started from his seat, and his comrades instantly rising in consternation, discovered the duke. They rushed with loud vociferation towards the mouth of the cave. He endeavoured to escape to his people ; but two of the banditti mounting the horses which were grazing near, quickly overtook and seized him. His dress and air proclaimed him to be a person of distinction ; and, rejoicing in their prospect of plunder, they forced him towards the cave. Here their comrades awaited them ; but what were the emotions of the duke, when he discovered in the person of the principal robber

robber his own son ! who, to escape the galling severity of his father, had fled from his castle some years before, and had not been heard of since.

He had placed himself at the head of a party of banditti, and, pleased with the liberty which till then he had never tasted, and with the power which his new situation afforded him, he became so much attached to this wild and lawless mode of life, that he determined never to quit it till death should dissolve those ties which now made his rank only oppressive. This event seemed at so great a distance, that he seldom allowed himself to think of it. Whenever it should happen, he had no doubt that he might either resume his rank without danger of discovery, or might justify his present conduct as a frolic, which a few acts of generosity would easily excuse. He knew his power would then place him beyond the reach of censure, in a country where the people are ac-

customed to implicit subordination, and seldom dare to scrutinize the actions of the nobility.

His sensations, however, on discovering his father, were not very pleasing; but proclaiming the duke, he protected him from farther outrage.

With the duke, whose heart was a stranger to the softer affections, indignation usurped the place of parental feeling. His pride was the only passion affected by the discovery; and he had the rashness to express the indignation, which the conduct of his son had excited, in terms of unrestrained invective. The banditti, inflamed by the opprobrium with which he loaded their order, threatened instant punishment to his temerity; and the authority of Riccardo could hardly restrain them within the limits of forbearance.

The menaces, and at length entreaties of the duke, to prevail with his son to abandon his present way of life, were equally

equally ineffectual. Secure in his own power, Riccardo laughed at the first, and was insensible to the latter; and his father was compelled to relinquish the attempt. The duke, however, boldly and passionately accused him of having plundered and secreted a lady and cavalier, his friends, at the same time describing Julia, for whose liberation he offered large rewards. Riccardo denied the fact, which so much exasperated the duke, that he drew his sword with an intention of plunging it in the breast of his son. His arm was arrested by the surrounding banditti, who half unsheathed their swords, and stood suspended in an attitude of menace. The fate of the father now hung upon the voice of the son. Riccardo raised his arm, but instantly dropped it, and turned away. The banditti sheathed their weapons, and stepped back.

Riccardo solemnly swearing that he knew nothing of the persons described,

the duke at length became convinced of the truth of the assertion, and, departing from the cave, rejoined his people. All the impetuous passions of his nature were roused and inflamed by the discovery of his son in a situation so wretchedly disgraceful. Yet it was his pride rather than his virtue that was hurt; and when he wished him dead, it was rather to save himself from disgrace, than his son from the real indignity of vice. He had no means of reclaiming him; to have attempted it by force, would have been at this time the excess of temerity, for his attendants, though numerous, were undisciplined, and would have fallen certain victims to the power of a savage and dexterous banditti.

With thoughts agitated in fierce and agonizing conflict, he pursued his journey; and having lost all trace of Julia, sought only for an habitation which might shelter him from the night, and afford

afford necessary refreshment for himself and his people. With this, however, there appeared little hope of meeting.

CHAPTER IV.

THE night grew stormy. The hollow winds swept over the mountains, and blew bleak and cold around; the clouds were driven swiftly over the face of the moon, and the duke and his people were frequently involved in total darkness. They had travelled on silently and dejectedly for some hours, and were bewildered in the wilds, when they suddenly heard the bell of a monastery chiming for midnight prayer. Their hearts revived at the sound, which they endeavoured to follow; but they had not gone far, when the gale wafted it away, and they were abandoned to the uncertain guide of their own conjectures.

They had pursued for some time the way which they judged led to the monastery, when the note of the bell returned upon the wind, and discovered

to

to them that they had mistaken their route. After much wandering and difficulty they arrived, overcome with weariness, at the gates of a large and gloomy fabric. The bell had ceased, and all was still. By the moon-light, which through broken clouds now streamed upon the building, they became convinced it was the monastery they had sought, and the duke himself struck loudly upon the gate.

Several minutes elapsed, no person appeared, and he repeated the stroke. A step was presently heard within, the gate was unbarred, and a thin, shivering figure presented itself. The duke solicited admission, but was refused, and reprimanded for disturbing the convent at the hour sacred to prayer. He then made known his rank, and bade the friar inform the Superior that he requested shelter from the night. The friar, suspicious of deceit, and apprehensive of robbers, refused with much
firm-

firmness, and repeated that the convent was engaged in prayer; he had almost closed the gate, when the duke, whom hunger and fatigue made desperate, rushed by him, and passed into the court. It was his intention to present himself to the Superior, and he had not proceeded far, when the sound of laughter, and of many voices in loud and mirthful jollity, attracted his steps. It led him through several passages to a door, through the crevices of which light appeared. He paused a moment, and heard within a wild uproar of merriment and song. He was struck with astonishment, and could scarcely credit his senses!

He unclosed the door, and beheld, in a large room, well lighted, a company of friars, drest in the habit of their order, placed round a table, which was profusely spread with wines and fruits. The Superior, whose habit distinguished him from his associates, appeared at the
head

head of the table. He was lifting a large goblet of wine to his lips, and was roaring out, " Profusion and confusion," at the moment when the duke entered. His appearance caused a general alarm; that part of the company who were not too much intoxicated, arose from their seats; and the Superior, dropping the goblet from his hands, endeavoured to assume a look of austerity, which his rosy countenance belied. The duke received a reprimand, delivered in the lisping accents of intoxication, and embellished with frequent interjections of hiccup. He made known his quality, his distress, and solicited a night's lodging for himself and his people. When the Superior understood the distinction of his guest, his features relaxed into a smile of joyous welcome; and taking him by the hand, he placed him by his side.

The table was quickly covered with luxurious provisions, and orders were
given

given that the duke's people should be admitted, and taken care of. He was regaled with a variety of the finest wines, and, at length, highly elevated by monastic hospitality, he retired to the apartment allotted him, leaving the Superior in a condition which precluded all ceremony.

He departed in the morning, very well pleased with the accommodating principles of monastic religion. He had been told that the enjoyment of the good things of this life was the surest sign of our gratitude to Heaven; and it appeared, that within the walls of a Sicilian monastery, the precept and the practice were equally enforced.

He was now at a loss what course to chuse, for he had no clue to direct him towards the object of his pursuit; but hope still invigorated, and urged him to perseverance. He was not many leagues from the coast; and it occurred to him, that the fugitives might make
towards

towards it with a design of escaping into Italy. He therefore determined to travel towards the sea, and proceed along the shore.

At the house where he stopped to dine, he learned that two persons, such as he described, had halted there about an hour before his arrival, and had set off again in much seeming haste. They had taken the road towards the coast, whence it was obvious to the duke they designed to embark. He stayed not to finish the repast set before him, but instantly remounted to continue the pursuit.

To the enquiries he made of the persons he chanced to meet, favourable answers were returned for a time; but he was at length bewildered in uncertainty, and travelled for some hours in a direction which chance, rather than judgment, prompted him to take.

The falling evening again confused his prospects, and unsettled his hopes.

hopes. The shades were deepened by thick and heavy clouds that enveloped the horizon, and the deep sounding air foretold a tempest. The thunder now rolled at a distance, and the accumulated clouds grew darker. The duke and his people were on a wild and dreary heath, round which they looked in vain for shelter, the view being terminated on all sides by the same desolate scene. They rode, however, as hard as their horses would carry them; and at length one of the attendants espied on the skirts of the waste a large mansion, towards which they immediately directed their course.

They were overtaken by the storm; and at the moment when they reached the building, a peal of thunder, which seemed to shake the pile, burst over their heads. They now found themselves in a large and ancient mansion, which seemed totally deserted, and was fallen to decay. The edifice was
 distin-

distinguished by an air of magnificence, which ill accorded with the surrounding scenery, and which excited some degree of surprize in the mind of the duke, who, however fully justified the owner in forsaking a spot, which presented to the eye only views of rude and desolated nature.

The storm encreased with much violence, and threatened to detain the duke a prisoner in his present habitation for the night. The hall, of which he and his people had taken possession, exhibited in every feature, marks of ruin and desolation. The marble pavement was in many places broken, the walls were mouldering in decay, and round the high and shattered windows the long grass waved to the lonely gale. Curiosity led him to explore the recesses of the mansion. He quitted the hall, and entered upon a passage which conducted him to a remote part of the edifice. He wandered through the wild and spacious apart-

apartments in gloomy meditation, and often paused in wonder at the remains of magnificence which he beheld.

The mansion was irregular and vast, and he was bewildered in its intricacies. In endeavouring to find his way back, he only perplexed himself more, till at length he arrived at a door, which he believed led into the hall he first quitted. On opening it, he discovered, by the faint light of the moon, a large place, which he scarcely knew whether to think a cloister, a chapel, or a hall. It retired in long perspective, in arches, and terminated in a large iron gate, through which appeared the open country.

The lightnings flashed thick and blue around, which, together with the thunder, that seemed to rend the wide arch of Heaven, and the melancholy aspect of the place, so awed the duke, that he involuntarily called to his people. His voice was answered only
by

by the deep echoes which ran in murmurs through the place, and died away at a distance; and the moon now sinking behind a cloud, left him in total darkness.

He repeated the call more loudly, and at length heard the approach of footsteps. A few moments relieved him from his anxiety, for his people appeared. The storm was yet loud, and the heavy and sulphureous appearance of the atmosphere promised no speedy abatement of it. The duke endeavoured to reconcile himself to pass the night in his present situation, and ordered a fire to be lighted in the place he was in. This with much difficulty was accomplished. He then threw himself on the pavement before it, and tried to endure the abstinence which he had so ill observed in the monastery on the preceding night. But to his great joy, his attendants, more provident than himself, had not scrupled to accept a comfortable

able quantity of provisions which had been offered them at the monastery; and which they now drew forth from a wallet. They were spread upon the pavement; and the duke, after refreshing himself, delivered up the remains to his people. Having ordered them to watch by turns at the gate, he wrapt his cloak round him, and resigned himself to repose.

The night passed without any disturbance. The morning arose fresh and bright; the Heavens exhibited a clear and unclouded concave; even the wild heath, refreshed by the late rains, smiled around, and sent up with the morning gale a stream of fragrance.

The duke quitted the mansion, re-animated by the cheerfulness of morn, and pursued his journey. He could gain no intelligence of the fugitives. About noon he found himself in a beautifully romantic country; and having reached the summit of some wild cliffs,

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he rested to view the picturesque imagery of the scene below. A shadowy, sequestered dell appeared buried deep among the rocks, and in the bottom was seen a lake, whose clear bosom reflected the impending cliffs, and the beautiful luxuriance of the overhanging shades.

But his attention was quickly called from the beauties of inanimate nature, to objects more interesting; for he observed two persons, whom he instantly recollected to be the same that he had formerly pursued over the plains. They were seated on the margin of the lake, under the shade of some high trees at the foot of the rocks, and seemed partaking of a repast which was spread upon the grass. Two horses were grazing near. In the lady, the duke saw the very air and shape of Julia, and his heart bounded at the sight. They were seated with their backs to the cliffs upon which the duke stood, and he therefore surveyed them unobserved.

They

They were now almost within his power, but the difficulty was how to descend the rocks, whose stupendous heights and craggy steeps seemed to render them impassable. He examined them with a scrutinizing eye, and at length espied, where the rock receded, a narrow winding sort of path. He dismounted, and some of his attendants doing the same, followed their lord down the cliffs, treading lightly, lest their steps should betray them. Immediately upon their reaching the bottom, they were perceived by the lady, who fled among the rocks, and was presently pursued by the duke's people. The cavalier had no time to escape, but drew his sword, and defended himself against the furious assault of the duke.

The combat was sustained with much vigour and dexterity on both sides for some minutes, when the duke received the point of his adversary's sword, and fell. The cavalier, endeavouring to escape,

cape, was seized by the duke's people, who now appeared with the fair fugitive;—but what was the disappointment—the rage of the duke, when in the person of the lady he discovered a stranger! The astonishment was mutual, but the accompanying feelings were, in the different persons, of a very opposite nature. In the duke, astonishment was heightened by vexation, and embittered by disappointment:—in the lady, it was softened by the joy of unexpected deliverance.

This lady was the younger daughter of a Sicilian nobleman, whose avarice, or necessities, had devoted her to a convent. To avoid the threatened fate, she fled with the lover, to whom her affections had long been engaged, and whose only fault, even in the eye of her father, was inferiority of birth. They were now on their way to the coast, whence they designed to pass over to Italy, where the church would confirm the bonds

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which

which their hearts had already formed. There the friends of the cavalier resided, and with them they expected to find a secure retreat.

The duke, who was not materially wounded, after the first transport of his rage had subsided, suffered them to depart. Relieved from their fears, they joyfully set forward, leaving their late pursuer to the anguish of defeat, and fruitless endeavour. He was remounted on his horse; and having dispatched two of his people in search of a house where he might obtain some relief, he proceeded slowly on his return to the castle of Mazzini.

It was not long ere he recollected a circumstance which, in the first tumult of his disappointment, had escaped him, but which so essentially affected the whole tenour of his hopes, as to make him again irresolute how to proceed. He considered that, although these were the fugitives he had pursued over the
plains,

plains, they might not be the same who had been secreted in the cottage, and it was therefore possible that Julia might have been the person whom they had for some time followed from thence. This suggestion awakened his hopes, which were however quickly destroyed; for he remembered that the only persons who could have satisfied his doubts, were now gone beyond the power of recall. To pursue Julia, when no traces of her flight remained, was absurd; and he was therefore compelled to return to the marquis, as ignorant and more hopeless than he had left him. With much pain he reached the village which his emissaries had discovered, where fortunately he obtained some medical assistance. Here he was obliged by indisposition to rest. The anguish of his mind equalled that of his body. Those impetuous passions which so strongly marked his nature, were roused and exasperated to a degree that

operated powerfully upon his constitution, and threatened him with the most alarming consequences. The effect of his wound was heightened by the agitation of his mind; and a fever, which quickly assumed a very serious aspect, co-operated to endanger his life.

CHAPTER VI.

THE castle of Mazzini was still the scene of dissention and misery. The impatience and astonishment of the marquis being daily increased by the lengthened absence of the duke, he dispatched servants to the forest of Marentino, to enquire the occasion of this circumstance. They returned with intelligence, that neither Julia, the duke, nor any of his people were there. He therefore concluded, that his daughter had fled the cottage upon information of the approach of the duke, who, he believed, was still engaged in the pursuit. With respect to Ferdinand, who yet pined in sorrow and anxiety, in his dungeon, the rigour of the marquis's conduct was unabated. He apprehended that his son, if liberated, would quickly discover the retreat of Julia, and by his advice and assistance, confirm her in disobedience.

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Ferdinand,

Ferdinand, in the stillness and solitude of his dungeon, brooded over the late calamity in gloomy, ineffectual lamentation. The idea of Hippolitus—of Hippolitus murdered—arose to his imagination in busy intrusion, and subdued the strongest efforts of his fortitude. Julia too, his beloved sister—unprotected—unfriended—might, even at the moment he lamented her, be sinking under sufferings dreadful to humanity. The airy schemes he once formed of future felicity, resulting from the union of two persons so justly dear to him—with the gay visions of past happiness—floated upon his fancy, and the lustre they reflected, served only to heighten by contrast, the obscurity and gloom of his present views. He had, however, a new subject of astonishment, which often withdrew his thoughts from their accustomed object, and substituted a sensation less painful, though scarcely less powerful. One night, as he lay ruminating

nating on the past in melancholy dejection, the stillness of the place was suddenly interrupted by a low and dismal sound. It returned at intervals in hollow sighings, and seemed to come from some person in deep distress. So much did fear operate upon his mind, that he was uncertain whether it arose from within or from without. He looked round his dungeon, but could distinguish no object through the impenetrable darkness. As he listened in deep amazement, the sound was repeated in moans more hollow. Terror now occupied his mind and disturbed his reason; he started from his posture, and, determined to be satisfied whether any person beside himself was in the dungeon, groped with arms extended, along the walls. The place was empty; but coming to a particular spot, the sound suddenly arose more distinctly to his ear. He called aloud, and asked who was there; but received no answer. Soon after all was still; and, after listen-

ing for some time without hearing the sounds renewed, he laid himself down to sleep. On the following day, he mentioned to the man who brought him food what he had heard, and enquired concerning the noise. The servant appeared very much terrified, but could give no information that might in the least account for the circumstance, till he mentioned the vicinity of the dungeon to the southern buildings. The dreadful relation formerly given by the marquis instantly recurred to the mind of Ferdinand, who did not hesitate to believe, that the moans he heard came from the restless spirit of the murdered della Campo. At this conviction, horror thrilled his nerves; but he remembered his oath, and was silent. His courage, however, yielded to the idea of passing another night alone in his prison, where, if the vengeful spirit of the murdered should appear, he might even die of the horror which its appearance would inspire.

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The mind of Ferdinand was highly superior to the general influence of superstition; but, in the present instance, such strong correlative circumstances appeared, as compelled even incredulity to yield. He had himself heard strange and awful sounds in the forsaken southern buildings; he received from his father a dreadful secret relative to them—a secret in which his honour, nay, even his life, was bound up. His father had also confessed, that he had himself there seen appearances which he could never after remember without horror, and which had occasioned him to quit that part of the castle. All these recollections presented to Ferdinand a chain of evidence too powerful to be resisted; and he could not doubt that the spirit of the dead had for once been permitted to revisit the earth, and to call down vengeance on the descendants of the murderer.

This conviction occasioned him a degree of horror, such as no apprehension

of mortal powers could have excited ; and he determined, if possible, to prevail on Peter to pass the hours of midnight with him in his dungeon. The strictness of Peter's fidelity yielded to the persuasions of Ferdinand, though no bribe could tempt him to incur the resentment of the marquis, by permitting an escape. Ferdinand passed the day in lingering, anxious expectation, and the return of night brought Peter to the dungeon. His kindness exposed him to a danger which he had not foreseen ; for, when seated in the dungeon alone with his prisoner, how easily might that prisoner have conquered him, and left him to pay his life to the fury of the marquis. He was preserved by the humanity of Ferdinand, who instantly perceived his advantage, but disdained to involve an innocent man in destruction, and spurned the suggestion from his mind.

Peter, whose friendship was stronger
than

than his courage, trembled with apprehension as the hour drew nigh in which the groans had been heard on the preceding night. He recounted to Ferdinand a variety of terrific circumstances, which existed only in the heated imaginations of his fellow servants, but which were still admitted by them as facts. Among the rest, he did not omit to mention the light and the figure which had been seen to issue from the south tower on the night of Julia's intended elopement; a circumstance which he embellished with innumerable aggravations of fear and wonder. He concluded with describing the general consternation it had caused, and the consequent behaviour of the marquis, who laughed at the fears of his people, yet condescended to quiet them by a formal review of the buildings whence their terror had originated. He related the adventure of the door which refused to yield, the sounds which arose

from within, and the discovery of the fallen roof; but declared that neither he, nor any of his fellow-servants believed the noise, or the obstruction proceeded from that, "because, my lord," continued he, "the door seemed to be held only in one place; and as for the noise—O! Lord! I never shall forget what a noise it was!—it was a thousand times louder than what any stones could make."

Ferdinand listened to this narrative in silent wonder! wonder not occasioned by the adventure described, but by the hardihood and rashness of the marquis, who had thus exposed to the inspection of his people, that dreadful spot which he knew from experience to be the haunt of an injured spirit; a spot which he had hitherto scrupulously concealed from human eye, and human curiosity; and which, for so many years, he had not dared even himself to enter. Peter went on, but was presently interrupted by

By a hollow moan, which seemed to come from beneath the ground. "Blessed virgin !" exclaimed he : Ferdinand listened in awful expectation. A groan longer and more dreadful was repeated ; when Peter, starting from his seat, and snatching up the lamp, rushed out of the dungeon. Ferdinand, who was left in total darkness, followed to the door, which the affrighted Peter had not stopped to fasten, but which had closed, and seemed held by a lock that could be opened only on the outside. The sensations of Ferdinand, thus compelled to remain in the dungeon, are not to be imagined. The horrors of the night, whatever they were to be, he was to endure alone. By degrees, however, he seemed to acquire the valour of despair. The sounds were repeated, at intervals, for near an hour, when silence returned, and remained undisturbed during the rest of the night. Ferdinand was alarmed by no appearance, and, at length, overcome

come with anxiety and watching, he sunk to repose.

On the following morning, Peter returned to the dungeon, scarcely knowing what to expect, yet expecting something very strange, perhaps the murder, perhaps the supernatural disappearance of his young lord. Full of these wild apprehensions, he dared not venture thither alone, but persuaded some of the servants, to whom he had communicated his terrors, to accompany him to the door. As they passed along, he recollected, that, in the terror of the preceding night, he had forgot to fasten the door, and he now feared that his prisoner had made his escape without a miracle. He hurried to the door; and his surprise was extreme to find it fastened. It instantly struck him that this was the work of a supernatural power, when on calling aloud, he was answered by a voice from within. His absurd fear did not suffer him to recognize the voice of

of Ferdinand, neither did he suppose that Ferdinand had failed to escape; he, therefore, attributed the voice to the being he had heard on the preceding night; and, starting back from the door, fled with his companions to the great hall. There the uproar occasioned by their entrance called together a number of persons, amongst whom was the marquis, who was soon informed of the cause of alarm, with a long history of the circumstances of the foregoing night. At this information, the marquis assumed a very stern look, and severely reprimanded Peter for his imprudence; at the same time reproaching the other servants with their undutifulness in thus disturbing his peace. He reminded them of the condescension he had practised to dissipate their former terrors, and of the result of their examination. He then assured them, that since indulgence had only encouraged intrusion, he would for the future be severe;

vere; and concluded with declaring, that the first man who should disturb him with a repetition of such ridiculous apprehensions, or should attempt to disturb the peace of the castle by circulating these idle notions, should be rigorously punished, and banished his dominions. They shrunk back at this reproof, and were silent. "Bring a torch," said the marquis, "and shew me to the dungeon. I will once more condescend to confute you."

They obeyed, and descended with the marquis, who, arriving at the dungeon, instantly threw open the door, and discovered to the astonished eyes of his attendants—Ferdinand!—He started with surprize at the entrance of his father thus attended. The marquis, darting upon him a severe look, which he perfectly comprehended—"Now," cried he, turning to his people, "what do you see? My son, whom I myself placed here, and whose voice, which
answered

answered to your calls, you have transformed into unknown sounds. Speak, Ferdinand, and confirm what I say." Ferdinand, did so. "What dreadful spectre appeared to you last night?" resumed the marquis, looking stedfastly upon him: gratify these fellows with a description of it, for they cannot exist without something of the marvelous." "None, my lord," replied Ferdinand, who too well understood the manner of the marquis. "'Tis well," cried the marquis, "and this is the last time," turning to his attendants, "that your folly shall be treated with so much lenity." He ceased to urge the subject, and forbore to ask Ferdinand even one question before his servants, concerning the nocturnal sounds described by Peter. He quitted the dungeon with eyes steadily bent in anger and suspicion upon Ferdinand. The marquis suspected that the fears of his son had inadvertently betrayed to Peter a part of the secret intrusted to him, and he

he artfully interrogated Peter with seeming carelessness, concerning the circumstances of the preceding night. From him he drew such answers as honourably acquitted Ferdinand of indiscretion, and relieved himself from tormenting apprehensions.

The following night passed quietly away; neither sound nor appearance disturbed the peace of Ferdinand. The marquis, on the next day, thought proper to soften the severity of his sufferings, and he was removed from his dungeon to a room strongly grated, but exposed to the light of day.

Meanwhile a circumstance occurred, which increased the general discord, and threatened Emilia with the loss of her last remaining comfort—the advice and consolation of Madame de Menon. The marchioness, whose passion for the count de Vereza had at length yielded to absence, and the pressure of present circumstances, now bestowed her smiles

upon

upon a young Italian cavalier, a visitor at the castle, who possessed too much of the spirit of gallantry to permit a lady to languish in vain. The marquis, whose mind was occupied with other passions, was insensible to the misconduct of his wife, who at all times had the address to disguise her vices beneath the gloss of virtue and innocent freedom. The intrigue was discovered by Madame, who, having one day left a book in the oak parlour, returned thither in search of it. As she opened the door of the apartment, she heard the voice of the cavalier in passionate exclamation ; and, on entering, discovered him rising in some confusion from the feet of the marchioness, who, darting at Madame a look of severity, arose from her seat. Madame, shocked at what she had seen, instantly retired, and buried in her own bosom that secret, the discovery of which would most essentially have poisoned the peace of the marquis. The marchioness,

chionefs, who was a stranger to the generosity of sentiment which actuated Madame de Menon, doubted not that she would seize the moment of retaliation, and expose her conduct where most she dreaded it should be known. The consciousness of guilt tortured her with incessant fear of discovery, and, from this period, her whole attention was employed to dislodge from the castle, the person to whom her character was committed. In this it was not difficult to succeed; for the delicacy of Madame's feelings made her quick to perceive, and to withdraw from a treatment unsuitable to the natural dignity of her character. She therefore resolved to depart from the castle; but disdaining to take an advantage even over a successful enemy, she determined to be silent on that subject, which would instantly have transferred the triumph from her adversary to herself. When the marquis, on hearing her determination

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to retire, earnestly enquired for the motive of her conduct, she forbore to acquaint him with the real one, and left him to incertitude and disappointment.

To Emilia this design occasioned a distress which almost subdued the resolution of Madame. Her tears and intreaties spoke the artless energy of sorrow. In Madame she lost her only friend ; and she too well understood the value of that friend, to see her depart without feeling and expressing the deepest distress. From a strong attachment to the memory of the mother, Madame had been induced to undertake the education of her daughters, whose engaging dispositions had perpetuated a kind of hereditary affection. Regard for Emilia and Julia had alone for some time detained her at the castle ; but this was now succeeded by the influence of considerations too powerful to be resisted. As her income was small, it was her plan to retire to her native place, which

was

was situated in a distant part of the island, and there take up her residence in a convent.

Emilia saw the time of Madame's departure approach with increased distress. They left each other with a mutual sorrow, which did honour to their hearts. When her last friend was gone, Emilia wandered through the forsaken apartments, where she had been accustomed to converse with Julia, and to receive consolation and sympathy from her dear instructress, with a kind of anguish known only to those who have experienced a similar situation. Madame pursued her journey with a heavy heart. Separated from the objects of her fondest affections, and from the scenes and occupations for which long habit had formed claims upon her heart, she seemed without interest and without motive for exertion. The world appeared a wide and gloomy desert, where no heart welcomed her with kindness—no countenance

nance brightened into smiles at her approach. It was many years since she quitted Calini—and, in the interval, death had swept away the few friends she left there. The future presented a melancholy scene; but she had the retrospect of years spent in honourable endeavour and strict integrity, to cheer her heart and encourage her hopes.

But her utmost endeavours were unable to repress the anxiety with which the uncertain fate of Julia overwhelmed her. Wild and terrific images arose to her imagination. Fancy drew the scene;—she deepened the shades; and the terrific aspect of the objects she presented was heightened by the obscurity which involved them.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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